

BANDWAGON

THE JOURNAL OF THE CIRCUS
HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

March-April 1999



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THE FRONT COVER

For the first time in recent circus history three tented circuses day and dated in Las Vegas, Nevada on October 3, 1998.

Circo Osorio, Sterling & Reid Bros. and Circus Vargas were all in town at the same time. Photos by Bill Biggerstaff.

DUES NOTICES

The Circus Historical Society dues and *Bandwagon* subscription notices for 1999 were mailed in April.

Payments for the year starting May 1, 1999 must be received by July 1 or the July-August *Bandwagon* will not be mailed. Send your payment at once so you will not miss an issue. Please check that your name, address and zip code are correct.

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HELP NEEDED ON FELIX ADLER BOOK

With the wholehearted cooperation of his family, including his widow, Amelia, I have been writing a biography of the long-time (1914-59) Ringling Bros. clown, Felix Adler. This is a project of many years' work, beginning when I lived and did historical research in the town where he was born. I have read most of what has been written about him and have spoken with most of his close living relatives and several other people who knew him. I now realize that there is so much more I need to know to do justice to him and to the circus world in general. Somehow I have missed the heart and spirit of this biography. Can any of you readers help me? For example, What was it like on the road, and how would Felix have spent a day while the circus was touring? What made his gags work and what gags did he originate? To what extent did he design costumes for others? Where did he keep his pigs? What were Felix's relationships with other clowns and performers? What other questions should I be asking?

I also need additional pictures and permission to use them in a publication. I will appreciate any assistance you can give me. I will not publish this book until I am convinced that it is accurate for Felix and true to the soul of the circus.

Anne A. Bowbeer
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December, 1998

To: CIRCUS WORLD MUSEUM

Congratulations Circus World Museum and Greg Parkinson, Executive Director for accepting our offer to obtain Private Rail Car "RAS 60" as a living tribute to the Sedlmayr Family and Royal American Shows.

This joint effort could not have been accomplished without the assistance of Ringling Trainmaster Emeritus Charlie Smith, GFA Rail Services Jerry Alderman and Bill Gardner of Wisconsin & Southern Railroad and Northern Railcar Corporation.

Thanks also for the obtaining of our private car "RB 66," former rail home, office and entertainment center of Ringling Executive Rudy Bundy and his wife Katie. For years "RB 66" served Henry North and other Ringling personages.

As rail and museum consultants it is truly a pleasure to have played a part in the preservation process of these two historic mansions of the rail once part of "The World's Largest Midway" and "The Greatest Show On Earth."

Sincerely,

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 Founder and CEO



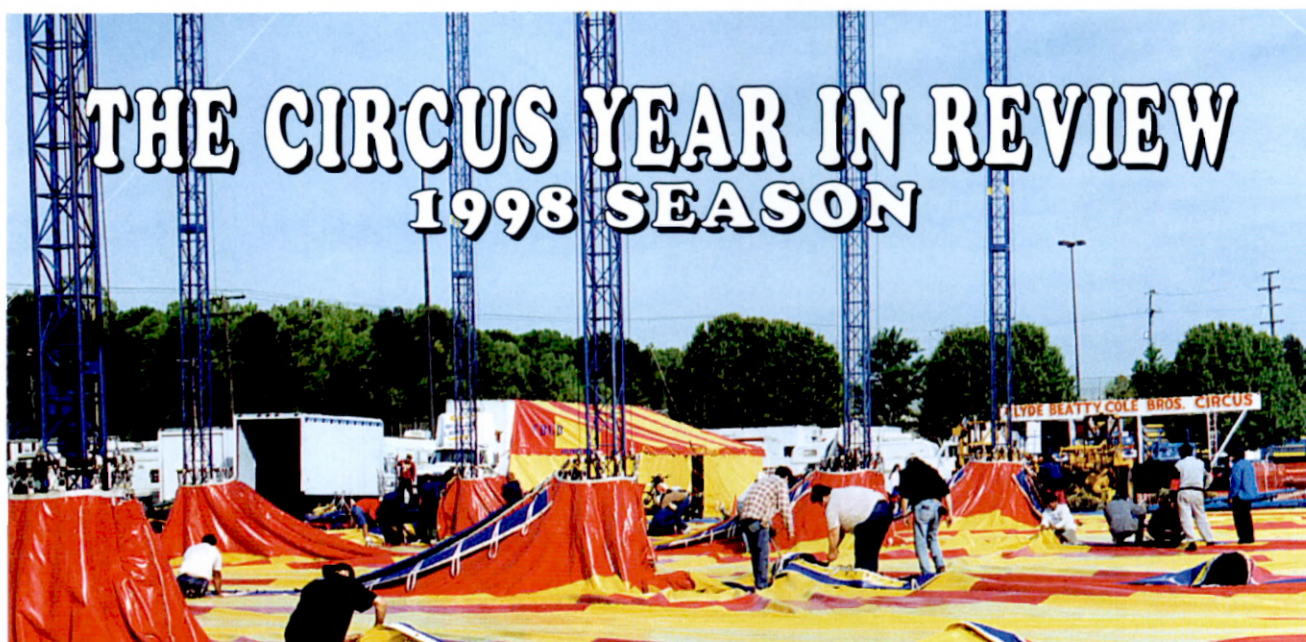
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HANK FRASER aboard
 "RB 66" in 1985 after
 arrival in Fraser Rail
 Yards along with the
 "JOMAR" rail home of
 both John Ringling and
 John Ringling North.



Established 1970
RAIL YACHTS OF YESTERDAY
TODAY

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BY FRED D. PFENING III

It was a fair to average year with no single event towering above others. The new wavers expanded; the tenters and Shriners shrunk. Jim Judkins combined the new and old circus as no one before. John Pugh built a fabulous tent. The animal rights people annoyed troupes with non-human performers. Big cats killed two show folks, and severely injured another. Cossack riding and the seven person pyramid made comebacks. Bizarre costumes, weird story lines, niche marketing, free kids' tickets, and shows with the word "cirque" in their title were in. Sponsorship, one hour shows with twenty minutes intermissions, phone rooms, and troupes with the word "brothers" in their title were out. As the late, great Clyde Beatty once said, "The times, they are a-changin'." And indeed they were. The big story of 1998 was the ascendancy of new wave circuses and traditional circuses which adopted parts of the new age credo.

Cirque du Soleil, with five units, was the biggest circus on the continent. Catering to sophisticated urban professionals and affluent vacationers, its size and scope had not been equaled by any other sawdust organization since the early 1930s. It spawned many imitators who copied its techniques and in some cases used its personnel. These

companies brought new blood and new ideas to the business, and as a consequence appealed to demographic groups whose previous connection to circuses was to avoid them. Years hence, Montreal will loom as large on the circus map as Bridgeport and Baraboo once did.

Some of the more traditional organizations, Big Apple, Ringling-Barnum and Beatty-Cole stand out, incorporated many of the new techniques and technologies into their productions, proving that mainline circuses were still both artistically and financially viable. While tent, Shrine and school shows continued to have a place in the great American middle class's entertainment universe, they lost much of their luster, particularly among the young who had so many other amusements to choose from. This segment of the industry continued its slow decline, as each year one or two companies folded and the number of available Shrine dates contracted.

Another fascinating trend was the rise of shows aimed exclusively at ethnic groups. The UniverSoul Circus brought black audiences, long ago strong circus-goers, back to the big top, and a number of Latino companies marketed to Hispanics. Their blending of European circus traditions with those of their own cultures created a hybrid circus, instantly

The new Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros. tent was the technical wonder of the year. Note the structural masts, four along each side of the rings, eliminating both center and quarter poles. Edward P. Meals photo.

recognizable and familiar, but infused and energized by a different aesthetic.

The thirty years war with animal rights activists continued. Ringling-Barnum encountered protesters at virtually every engagement, and smaller troupes saw picketers on a regular basis. They often passed out literature, much of it wildly inaccurate such as one brochure which charged that 5200 circus animals died each year. Activists also pressured sponsors and wrote letters to the editor condemning animal exhibitions. Legislative bodies debated, but usually did not pass, laws to restrict or eliminate the use of exotics. In one chilling incident, a performer had his liberty ponies confiscated. While many show folks, especially those with elephants or big cats, were pessimistic about the future of their professions, the vast majority of the public enjoyed trained animal acts on field shows and found nothing morally reprehensible about their exhibition in spite of years of proselyting by rightists.

Circuses which displayed their charms in buildings were the biggest segment of the industry. These aggre-

gations played virtually everywhere from the largest metropolitan arenas to the smallest rural armories. Despite its long tradition and excessive romanticizing, the tented, one-day stand circus was becoming a thing of the past, as population trends, economics and other forces gradually but unrelentingly pushed the industry back to its indoor roots. Outside a handful of scholars, few knew the North American circus had prospered for over three decades before it went under canvas in 1825, and the circus heritage of many large cities such as New York and Chicago was stronger indoors than out. Often maligned for not representing "real" circus, as if the venue was the distinguishing feature, the hard topped troupes had been the backbone of the business for years, providing more entertainment than any other variation of spangles.

The indoor segment's growth was in part fueled by the large number of arenas and other performance spaces opened in the last twenty years. Further, the explosive growth of Cirque du Soleil, with three year-round indoor units, and the growth of the new circus, particularly Soleil knock offs which almost always exhibited in theaters, also drove the indoor boom. The industry's calendar was thus profoundly altered, making the early months of the year more active than the summer. Without doubt, more Americans attended circuses under a roof than

Khan the giant signed autographs before each show as part of the Three Ring Adventure in which the audience interacted with the artists on the arena floor before each performance. Paul Gutheil photo.



any other type of space.

Always the brightest star in the arenic sky, Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey's two units continued to define extravaganzas while constantly innovating and reinventing themselves. The Blue unit, the new production, opened in Tampa in late December 1997, and played up the Atlantic coast before reaching the New York City area where it appeared at the Meadowlands, Nassau Coliseum, and Madison Square Garden. It exhibited at the Garden for eighteen days in late March and early April with the box office up 20% from the previous year.

Other Eastern dates followed before the company headed West, spending two months in California. Mountain state and Midwestern dates were next before the closing in Huntsville, Alabama in early December. The show traveled 16,543 miles with the longest jump being 1494 miles between Lexington and Lubbock. Along with its sister show, it was the last of the railroad circuses, moving on 55 cars comprised of 4 stocks, 32 coaches, 2 container flats, and 17 flats, the longest Ringling-Barnum train since 1956.

The season started on a tragic and bizarre note when tiger trainer Richard Chipperfield was badly mauled by one of his charges on January 8 in St. Petersburg, Florida, only the second date of the season. He suffered severe head injuries and was rushed to a hospital where he remained until April. Doctors predicted he would be partially paralyzed as a result of the attack, but by year's end he had recovered far beyond what had been thought possible. He was even able to horseback ride.

Brother Graham Chipperfield entered the cage soon after the assault, and unloaded five shotgun blasts into the offending



Ringling-Barnum Blue unit elephant herd gets a police escort up 10th Ave. in New York City in March on way to a mini performance for the Police Athletic League. Paul Gutheil photo.

tiger, sending him to heaven. This became a *cause celebre* to the animal rights crowd and created a horrendous public relations problem for the circus. Graham turned in his resignation two days later, although he apparently stayed after he was officially off the roster to break in his and his brother's successor. The tiger act was off the program for a while before Daniel Raffo-Villa, an Argentinean, was brought in to work the cats. In late January, the Florida State Attorney's office ruled that no animal cruelty charges would be brought against Graham, although the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) issued a "serious warning" for "failure to use an appropriate method of euthanasia." In November, Graham Chipperfield surfaced as part of a group of ex-Ringling-Barnum personnel who provided circus acts for theaters and arenas. Their first project produced the sawdust features on the Kiss Psycho Circus rock tour.

The performance had a sideshow theme, featuring Aurengzeb Khan, billed as the world's tallest man. Other talent in this portion of the show included a strong man, a contortionist, a sword walker, a human volcano, a snake handler (who we are tempted to call a geek even though he wasn't), and midgets, one of whom was Michu, the star of yesteryear, back after a long exile. Other artists included the Ayala sisters in their hair hang routine, Raul Rodriguez with his sheep dogs, Katya Odintsova in a cloud swing, the

Torosiant troupe on a comedy trampoline, the Kambarov Cossack riders, the Quiros on the high wire, the Tur flyers on the flying trapeze, Liubov and Nikolai Polonik with their poodles, and Mark Myers and Vesta Gueschkova in a double barreled human cannon. Raffo-Villa, besides his duties with the tigers, also presented the thirteen elephants with Patrick Harned and Alex Vargas. Jim Ragona was ringmaster and David Killinger directed the band. Eighteen clowns provided the mirth. One skit, a parody of the wild man of Borneo, was called, in a cute inside joke, the wild man of Baraboo after the Ringling brothers' hometown.

The Three Ring Adventure, the pre-show warm up in which the audience entered the arena floor to interact with performers, continued to be a big hit. Many activities were available including posing with Khan for photographs and getting his autograph. During the Madison Square Garden run, Jacques Mbembo, a member of an African acrobatic group, incurred second and third degree burns after setting himself on fire during a performance. A prop hand was hospitalized in November after being attacked by a tiger which had escaped its cage.

The Red unit, in its second season, opened in Fort Myers, Florida in late December 1997. Other Southern engagements followed before crossing the Ohio River to play Cincinnati in March. Dates in the Washington area, West Virginia and Virginia were next before the big jump from Roanoke, Virginia to Mexico City in May. After reentering this country, the show spent a month and a half in Texas starting on July 1. Stands in Detroit, Boston, Pittsburgh, and St. Louis concluded the year with the last exhibition on November 8. The troupe moved 15,621 miles with the Roanoke-Mexico City jump accounting for over 2400 miles of the total. Fifty-two railroad cars carried the personnel, animals and equipment, including 4 stocks, 30 coaches, 2 container flats, and 16 flats.

January was also a bad month for this unit. On January 24, Kenny, a



The giant Kahn appearing in the spec in Madison Square Garden. Fred D. Pfening, Jr. photo.

three year old elephant, died of an infection in Jacksonville, Florida. In April, the USDA filed two complaints against the show, stating it was slow to respond to the elephant's stress, and made the elephant perform before being examined by a veterinarian. Later in the year the show was required to donate \$10,000 to a nonprofit elephant sanctuary, and an organization or institution which conducted research on infectious diseases in elephants.

In-ring attractions included the Guerrero high wire act with the seven person pyramid, the hippo Zusha, clown David Larible, Emil Popescu with his sea lions, the Sallay teeterboard troupe, the King Charles comedy unicyclers, the Ripple brothers in a living statue routine, the Flying Caballeros, and Mark Oliver Gebel with liberty horses, tigers, and elephants. Gunther Gebel-Williams got in the ring in Indianapolis in September, filling in on all three of his son's turns while Mark took a quick leave of absence when his wife had a baby.

The big news from the Ringling-Barnum camp was the September announcement that Barnum's Kaleidoscope, the organization's first under-canvas circus since 1956, would open in early 1999 with David Larible headlining the performance. The company had a major presence at Milwaukee's Great Circus Parade with King Tusk (nee Tommy) the elephant on display and a tent in which children could meet clowns, try on wardrobe, swing on a trapeze, and experience other aspects of the circus. Clown College was shelved,

although there were rumblings that specific clown routines might be framed in a college-like atmosphere.

Besides the circuses, Feld Entertainment, the parent company, operated a number of touring ice shows including the new *Grease on Ice*, and the Siegfried and Roy magic show at Las Vegas' Mirage Hotel. Madhattan, a show produced by the Feld organization at the New York, New York Casino in Vegas, closed in May after only a year. A new live touring show called *Goosebumps*, based on the series of books for children, opened late in the year. Owner Kenneth Feld's assets were listed at \$650 million by *Forbes* magazine in its annual survey of wealthy Americans.

Cirque Ingenieux was the poor man's Soleil. Produced by Neil Goldberg, the show appeared across the country from January until June, after which it performed at an Atlantic City casino through September. It apparently then went into hiatus as the next recorded engagement was in Boston around Christmas. While it had elements of its Canadian cousin's other-worldly theatricality, it was far cheerier and upbeat. Often appearing as part of theater series, the troupe attracted the valet-parking crowd who wouldn't go to Carson and Barnes if it fell on them.

The plot, such as it was, concerned a little girl's dreams of tanbark glory after attending a circa 1900 circus. Among the sawdust skills featured were juggling, trapeze, magic, rola bola, Risley, head balancing, web and clowning. Of particular note were two Mongolian contortionists, and two Polish hand balancers, both of whose acts could appear anywhere. The musical score was written by some bright light of new age music, and the costumes and lighting were Broadway quality. Overall, it was a first-class production, and one of the more entertaining of the new wave shows.

The New Pickle Circus played high-end venues, often performing in arts centers. After showing in

California in January and February, the troupe crossed the country for dates in the East and Midwest in March. The home town run in San Francisco began on December and ran just past the new year. The early season production was "The Big Band . . . and Other Rude Noises," a reprise of the previous year's show. Directed and choreographed by Tandy Beal, the performance started, and we're not making this up, with a mother and father clown being transported back to the moment of the universe's creation with the help of a friendly alien, which begged the question why these arty shows never had a mundane theme such as a child losing her dog. Pickle debuted its new show, called "Step Right Up," in San Francisco in December. Directed by Beal, it featured acrobats Yuri and Svetlana Golobova, comic Amos Glick, and clowns Jeff Raz and Diane Wasnak. The show had a live band, but no animals.

Cirque Eloize started the year with a late January date in Hawaii where the troupe apparently rocked audiences. The mainland winter and spring tour took place in the Midwest and East, mainly in up-scale locations such as college campuses. A solitary engagement in St. Paul was recorded in October, although there must have been others on the fall itinerary. It moved on two vans and a rented flatbed truck. "Excentricus," as the show was called, presented nineteen performers, mostly Cirque du Soleil alumni. The new wave performance featured juggling, tumbling, trapeze and slack wire, among other routines. It, too, carried no animals.

Circo Europa Zoppe was in Pittsburgh in October, Hot Springs in December, and one images elsewhere. At Pittsburgh the production featured Tosca Zoppe in an aerial number and riding, Giovanni Zoppe in his loop the loop routine and on the low wire, Bob Steele with his bears and elephants, Manuel Goncalves on rola bola, and the Flying Wallendas on the high wire. Alberto Zoppe, the show's head, spent much of the summer in Vermont training kids at Circus Smirkus.

The non-profit Make*A*Circus appeared in California recreation

centers, auditoriums and municipal parks during the summer. Founded by Peter Frankham, the show proffered an anti-smoking message to kids as part of the performance. Written by Jeff Raz, the show was titled "Lungman and Windpipe's Excellent Adventure." The show, and we never make this stuff up, took the performers on a voyage down the esophagus to learn about the dangers of secondhand smoke. Big Surprise Department: At some, and perhaps all, engagements the show was sponsored by the local chapter of the American Lung Association.

Gary Lashinsky's Royal Lipizzaner Stallion Show, the Wonderful World of Horses had two touring units and a stationary one in the Excaliber Hotel in Las Vegas. The Peking Acrobats made their twelfth tour of North America with a forty city nationwide tour featuring traditional Chinese fare such as contortion and tumbling by a twenty-eight member cast. The route ran from February to April with a second unit out for part of the time. In the fall, promoter Don Hughes took out a scaled-down version for smaller buildings called the Shangri-La Chinese Acrobats.

The Chinese Golden Dragon Acrobats were in Cincinnati for an arts group in March, and presumably elsewhere. The nine woman and eight man troupe foot juggled, plate spun, boomeranged, and chair balanced, among other skills. Danny Chang was director and producer, and Jan Sparks was show manager. The National Acrobats of China was another Asian production. It appeared in California in November.

Circuses sponsored by Shrine temples and other fraternal and charitable organizations were still a major part of the business in spite of the nationwide decline of such groups, particularly the Shrine which had lost about ten per cent of its mem-

bership each year for a decade. This type of tanbark had always been a mixed blessing because the generic title "Shrine Circus" precluded showmen from developing brand recognition and created the unfortunate situation in which producers competed on price rather than merit in negotiating contracts. In an era when the public was increasingly familiar with the potential of circus through Soleil, Big Apple, and other troupes, the tired, formulaic exhibitions of many of these shows, whose acts often did two or three turns each and had abominable clowning, looked stale and out of touch with current taste.

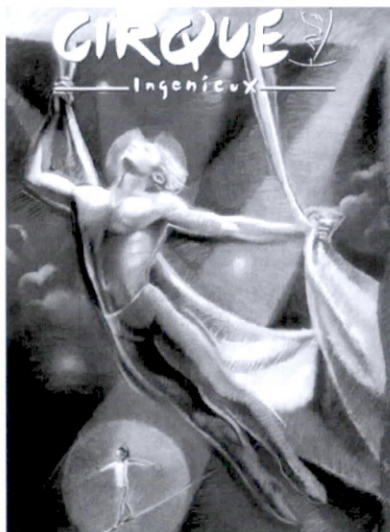
Cirque Ingenieux was a new waver playing theaters. Author's collection.

Nevertheless, some companies in this genre were fine shows, occasionally with first-rate acts

who had been on Ringling-Barnum, Big Apple and major European shows.

The annual mad scramble for dates occurred as temples sought new producers after beating down the old ones so much in price that the membership was dissatisfied with the end product, thus perpetuating a downward spiral. Some Shrine showmen attempted to recoup their investment by extending the intermission up to an unacceptable hour and a half to squeeze as much revenue from the elephant and other rides as possible. The public's distaste for such antics was predictable. Circus men and women were well aware of their dilemma, and many explored alternatives such as working directly with arenas.

The Royal Hanneford Circus was a major force in the Shrine business. Owners Tommy and Struppi Hanneford had a number of major temple bookings, a few big fairs, a tent at a Des Moines amusement park, and the circus at Milwaukee's Great Circus Parade. During the





Mark Karoly with the Royal Hanneford Circus elephants at Schaghticoke, New York in August. Robert Sugarman photo.

first week of April, the company fielded five shows, in Columbus, Pittsburgh, Harrisburg, Tampa and Miami, and at the end of that month had four out. Talent at the Indianapolis Shrine in March included Kay Rosaire with her lions and tigers, Johnny Peers with his dogs, Sylvia Zerbini with her horses and on the trapeze, Dick Kohlreiser with his ponies and dogs, Jose Vital with bows and arrows, Dana Kaseeva in her quick change routine, Roy and Cindy Wells with the Kelly-Miller elephants, and human cannonball David Smith, Jr. David Maas with ringmaster and Kay Parker led the band.

For the eleventh consecutive year, Hanneford presented the circus at Milwaukee's Great Circus Parade. Under the beautiful European one ring tent appeared Tom Turvey in trick roping and riding, a great aerial ballet with Rebecca Perez, juggler Gena Swartsman, Jose Vital with bows and arrows, Roman Tomanov on aerial straps, human statues Duo Atayde, and Mark Karoly in comedy riding and with the elephants. Veteran John Herriott was ringmaster and Kay Parker had the band.

The George Carden Circus was another big player in the Shrine game, appearing for temples across the United States and Canada with the Midwest most frequently visited. At times, it operated two units. Among the season highlights were bookings in Fort Worth, Houston, and Louisville, and a Shrine satellite run in Wisconsin during the summer.

Talent at the Milwaukee Shrine early in the year included Kay Rosaire with her tigers, the Flying Condors and the Flying Alvarados, juggler Justino Zoppe, the Golden Aztecs living statues, Susan Sheryll with her dogs, Steve Boger with his buffalo, Ross and Elisa Hartzell with bows and arrows, Davide Zoppe with his monkeys, the Moroccan Connection acrobats, Joe Frisco with the five Carden elephants, and human cannonball David Smith, Jr. Charles Vincent Amaral was ringmaster.

Carden experienced more weather problems than an indoor showman could reasonably expect. The Louisville Shrine in February was a disaster as a blizzard killed attendance. Several performances had fewer people in the stands than in the ring with only forty-three brave circus fans in attendance at one show. A Seguin, Texas date was postponed from late October to early November because of severe flooding in the area.

The Tarzan Zerbini Circus, also called Circus Maximus, had a number of Shrine engagements in this country and Canada, starting with its traditional late January opener in Fort Wayne, Indiana. One unit, and sometimes two, toured until at least late September. The big Shrine date at Marietta, Georgia in early May was a new addition to the route card. A former George Coronas under-canvas production, the engagement was indoors for the first time.

The strong line up at Fort Wayne included Bruno Blaszk with seven tigers, the Pedro Carrillo, Jr. troupe of high wire walkers, the Esqueda troupe on unicycles and teeterboard, Sylvia Zerbini with liberty horses and on the trapeze, Laura Herriott with dogs, juggler T. J. Howell, the Flying Lunas and the Flying Vargas,

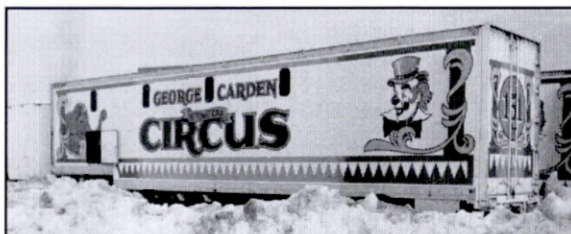
the Riders of the Night Cossack riders, and Mike Donoho, Roman Esqueda and Joe Frisco with the elephants. Joseph Dominic Bauer was ringmaster and doubled in the wheel of death, and Larry Solheim led the band.

The summer run through Canada was under a Scola Teloni tent seating 3500. Talent on this tour included Cat Dancers Joy and Ron Holiday with their big cats, Mike Donoho with four elephants, clown Raul Alvarez, the Riders of the Night, the Sophia Troupe on the Russian swing, the Flying Poemas, and Janie Coronas in a levitation illusion. Chuck Lizza was ringmaster.

Circus Gatti had its usual early February start in Texas before heading for the Pacific and Mountain states, and western Canada before the mid-October closing in California. About a third of its dates were for Shrines, a third for police and firefighter groups, and a third *sans* sponsor. Among the tanbark stars were Wilson Barnes with the tigers, the Rosonovi troupe on the Russian barre, the Castros on the high wire, the Flying Angels, Kimberly Zerbini with her dogs, the Boitchanovis on the teeterboard, John Pelton with the elephants, and Raul Segua on the inclined motorcycle. Rick Curtis was ringmaster and Emile Toca led the band. Owned by sisters Patricia and Carole Gatti, the show apparently had only a fair season.

The Hamid Circus Royale was an up and comer in the Shrine business with close to eighteen weeks of dates, about fifty percent more than the previous year. Headed by James Hamid, Sr. and Jr., the third and fourth generations of that illustrious family, the company picked up a

George Carden semi trailer in the February snow at Louisville's Broadbent Arena. Bill Rhodes photo.





Hamid Circus Royale at Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania in April. Human cannonball Brian Miser can be seen making his descent to the air bag. Paul Gutheil photo.

number of new dates during the year, including four in which they worked with John McConnell. Even eighty-something George Hamid, Jr. booked a stand or two.

The Moslem Temple date in Detroit was the biggest Hamid enterprise in years and a bright spot for the entire industry. The Wallenda family on the high wire was the feature, returning for the first time to the Michigan State Fairgrounds Coliseum in which they tragically fell in 1962. Organized by Tino Wallenda-Zoppe, the act recreated the historic seven person pyramid with Delilah Wallenda-Troffer the top stander for almost all the performances. The family connection story was a press agent's dream and garnered nationwide publicity. Attendance was the highest in at least a decade. Other artists in Detroit included the Flying Pages, a Cossack riding act, the Garza living statues, Dolly Jacobs on Roman rings, Sacha Pavlata and Aureilia Wallenda in a double cloud swing, Willi Pages in the wheel of death, Ada Smeiya with her tigers, and Lou Ann and Jorge Barreda with the elephants. Ian Garden worked his exotic liberty display at the opening performance, after which Laura Herriott took over the act. David SaLoutos was ringmaster and Bob Carabia directed the band.

The Buffalo and Binghamton, New York Shrine dates occurred simultaneously in early May. At Binghamton, ringmaster Peter Sturgis intro-

duced Othmar Vohringer with fourteen Hawthorn white tigers, the Garcia duo in an aerial cradle routine, the Flying Cortez, rider Tosca Zoppe, Laura Herriott with the Ian Garden mixed exotics, and Gary Thomas with the Hawthorn elephants. Danny Conn led the band.

The Jordan World Circus had both a Western and an Eastern unit, the former headed by Jody Jordan, and the latter by his mother and sister Patsy and Melanie Jordan. The Eastern unit opened for the Flint, Michigan Shrine in early January, and had other temple bookings in Toledo, Cincinnati, and Syracuse. It later appeared in the Dakotas and closed in Las Vegas. The Western unit opened in Phoenix, later played British Columbia for about six weeks, and appeared in Texas in September. This one's bookings had increased in recent years, in part as a result of landing former Carden dates.

At Flint, the program listed Susan Lacey with the Hawthorn white tigers, the Flying Lunas, the hand balancing Fausto Scorpions, Tavana Luvas in her upside down walk and later on the trapeze, Tahar the alligator king, the Jacobs-Barreda elephants, Ari Steeples with his bears, the Garza living statues, and the Alnus troupe on the Russian swing. Ari Steeples was ringmaster and Larry Stout was band leader. Old pro Billy Barton was performance director.

The Hubler International Circus had Shrine, PTA and police dates, usually in the East and Midwest. Owner George Hubler, Dayton, Ohio's gift to tanbark, had many repeat dates such as the Big 3 Ring Super Circus at Mentor, Ohio in

February. Performers there included Susan Vidbel with birds, Johnny Peers with his dogs, Gaylord Maynard with his comedy horse Chief Bear Paw, the hand balancing Fausto Scorpions, legendary juggler Dieter Tasso, Ian Garden with his mixed liberty animal display, Shane Johnson with tigers, and the Flying Espanas. Charlie Hackett was ringmistress. The roster for the Wheeling Shrine in August included Shane Johnson with tigers, Tavanna Luvas in her upside down walk, Arthur Duchek with his comedy piano and later as King Arthur on the high wire, Danny Carey on the rola bola, foot juggler Ken Taylor, Shane and Nicole Wright on revolving ladder, comedy trampoliner Don Otto, and Bobby Steele with bears and later elephants. Heidi Herriott was ringmistress, and Larry Rothbard had the band.

The Plunkett Bros. Circus had small-town Shrine dates in the South, Midwest, and Texas in the first half of the year. Actors for the Lafayette, Louisiana Shrine engagement included the Plunkett family with horses, camels, elephants, low wire, and ponies; Vincent Von Duke with mixed cats; Wendy Bell on aerial rings; Les "Cousin Grumpy" Kimes with his pigs; and the Geraldo family on the high wire and in the globe of death. Cindy Herriott was ringmistress, filling in for sister Christine who was tending a sick child. The Peoria Shrine in June included four days of satellite dates, a more common occurrence in temple troupes in recent years. James Plunkett, the family head, spent some of the summer with the show's elephants at Peru, Indiana's Circus Hall of Fame. The family was also affiliated with the Starr Bros. Circus in the summer and fall.

The Great Wallenda Circus, owned by Enrico Wallenda, had Midwestern and Southern Shrine dates, worked a Passover celebration in Brooklyn in June, and appeared in an amusement park during the summer. On the side-walled Iowa run in June the roster included the Poema family on the trampoline; Rietta Wallenda and her daughter Lyric on web; jugglers David Connors, Shane Hansen and Bobby Besmehn; umbrella juggler

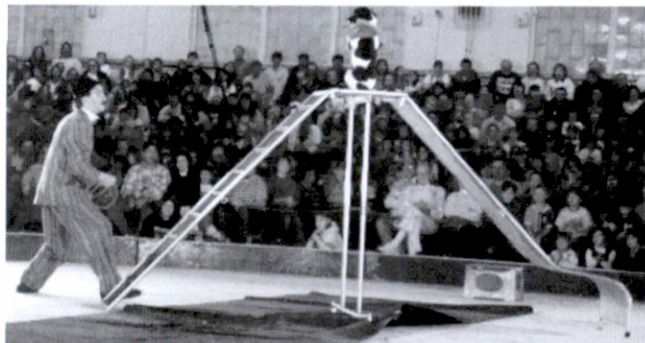


The Great Wallenda Circus flooded out in West Liberty, Iowa in June. Note trampoline in center ring. Timothy N. Tegge photo.

Iouri Kreis; foot juggler Diana Hansen; the Rolling Darrs on unicycles; Rietta Wallenda on sway pole; the Poemas with Rocky the boxing kangaroo; the Ricardo Espana duo on the inclined motorcycle; the roller skating Rolling Diamonds; Martin Guerrero in the wheel of death; and Terry Frisco with the elephants. Tim Tegge was ringmaster, and Charles Schlarbaum had the band for most of the tour. The Flying Espanas started the run, but left about mid way. They were replaced first by Valentino on the high wire, and then by the Flying Redpaths who finished the dates.

Garden Bros. Circus put on the Giant Holiday Circus in Toronto on January 3-4 before beginning its annual Shrine run in Canada from February to June. In September the organization, owned by brothers Ian and Richard Garden, played a fair in London, Ontario. Artists at the Holiday Circus in January included Jack Cook with his comedy car, Gaylord Maynard with his comedy

Johnny Peers with his dogs appeared on Wayne McCary's spring dates. Picture taken in Manchester, New Hampshire in April. Chuck Druding photo.



horse Chief Bear Paw, the Flying Montoyas, and human cannonball Brian Miser. Talent on the Shrine dates were Martin Alvarez on Russian straps, Ian Garden with his liberty horses, Tahar with three alligators, Gary Johnson

with two elephants, John and Tina Winn as the Astros on the inclined motorcycle, and Gaylord Maynard.

Wayne McCary produced the Shrine circus in Manchester, New Hampshire and five Maine towns in April and May. Kinkers on the "Maine dates" as the run was called, included Kay Rosaire with her cats, Bill Morris with his elephants, the Flying Espanas in flying return and wheel of death acts, the Alfonso Loyal-Repensky troupe of riders featuring Lucy Loyal, Johnny Peers with his dogs, the Marinoff duo in an aerial cradle, the Ramos family in Risley, and clowns Mike Keever and Dan Devaney. Charles Van Buskirk was ringmaster. McCary also produced the big Eastern States Exposition in September which sponsored a circus, making him both a purveyor and consumer of tanbark entertainment.

Paul Kaye's CircUSAmerica had its usual superb performance at the Hadi Temple circus in Evansville, Indiana in late November. It included Othmar Vohringer with the Hawthorn white tigers, the Marinoff duo on trapeze, Tom Thompson and Dionne Arata with Baby Nickolaus the elephant, the Zoppe family riders, Jim Hall with his bears, the Rosaire-Zoppe chimps, Welde's bears, the Boehmer family of jugglers, the Winns with their aerial motorcycle

and on sway poles, the Flying Espanas, Les Kimes with his pigs, Bill Bannister with his dogs, the Obando brothers on high wire, and double human cannonballs David and Jennifer Smith. It was the most talent

appearing at any Shrine performance during the year, and one of the strongest line-ups of any circus.

Bill Hall produced the circus for Nur Temple in Wilmington, Delaware in May. Talent for the one ringer included Lilla-Ana Kristensen with her leopards, Natalia Burdetsky on web, Christine Plunkett with liberty ponies and the elephants, juggler Nicholas Souren, James Plunkett on the low wire, Jeff Plunkett with his funny car, and Maya Zerbini with her poodles. Heidi Herriott was ringmistress, and Larry Rothbard had the band. Later in the year, Hall produced a surprise birthday part for the president of Johnson and Johnson at which the Rosaire-Zoppe chimps, the Moroccan Connection, Brackney's dogs, and chair balancer Shane Wright provided the entertainment.

Clyde Bros. Circus, Don Johnson's pride, Shrined in Kentucky and North Dakota. At Grand Forks, North Dakota in May Shane Johnson worked the family elephants. Ed Migley's Circus America, a strong Shrine competitor in years past, declared bankruptcy in Massachusetts in late 1997 or early 1998, and did not produce any circuses. Its downfall may have been related to a financially disastrous booking, which ended in litigation, in Atlanta during the 1996 Olympics.

Tented, side-walled, or open-aired, the outdoor branch of the business, while not the dominant format of past decades was still a highly utilized mode of exhibition. With a few notable exceptions, the tenters lurked in small towns and suburbia, eschewing urban centers. Most troupes in this genre were moderate in size, working either under the auspices of local service clubs, or using free childrens' tickets to bring in paying adults and sell concessions. While problems with logistics, lots, and overhead vexed the big toppers, they struggled on, aware that their traveling theaters were still the symbol of the industry to the public.

Cirque du Soleil, the Montreal juggernaut, was the largest circus company in North America at year's end, fielding six shows with five of them exhibiting simultaneously. Only the six circuses headed by John Ringling

in 1930 were bigger. Its operation was larger and far more complex than anything Jerry Mugivan ever ran. With touring companies in the United States and Europe, permanent venues in two Vegas casinos and Disney World, and the October premier in Canada of a new touring unit, the show cast as wide a shadow over the industry as the brothers Ringling did at the peak of their influence and power in 1910.

"Saltimbanco" began its Asian tour early in 1999, and an additional permanent show was scheduled to open in the spring at the Beau Rivage Casino in Biloxi, Mississippi. In all, about 1700 people cashed Soleil paychecks, about the same number as on Ringling-Barnum in the late 1930s.

The company stopped receiving government support and relinquished its tax exempt status. As a privately owned business, its revenues were \$210 million, double 1997's take, and profits a whopping \$24 million. Its remarkable appeal represented the triumph of new circus over old, and bespoke a major shift in the taste of the American circus-going public. Spawning many imitators, it was the most important circus of the last half century, pointing a new direction for the industry as much as the Barnum show of 1871 or Ringling-Barnum in 1957.

The American touring company, in its third and final year, was called "Quidam" which, translated from Soleilspeak, meant "a person who lives lost amidst the crowd in an all-too-anonymous society." It spoke "to our existential woes," noted the *Wall Street Journal*. The plot, and we're using that term loosely, was of a girl, ignored by her parents, who dreamt of acrobatics, juggling and other circus skills. It was the prototypical new age circus theme, one done often enough to become a cliché. The performance was designed, to quote the faux intellectual prose of the program, to "capture the frantic pulse of humanity awaiting the dawn of a new millennium," which was pretty much the same idea Al G. Barnes had when he produced Alice in Jungleland in the 1920s.

The production, while pretentious and preposterous in places, was nevertheless wildly entertaining in oth-

ers, especially to the bottled water set who thought it was the Kafka they read in college brought to life. "Quidam" did 85% capacity business under a 2500 seat big top in Dallas, New York City, Chicago, Washington, and Atlanta.

"Mystere" continued at Las Vegas' Treasure Island Casino where it was one of the strip's hottest tickets. In June the production welcomed its three millionth audience member, a woman from New York who received a number of gifts and took a bow with the cast at the show's end. "Alegria" rocked audiences in London, Barcelona, Madrid, Hamburg, Antwerp, Zurich and Frankfurt.

"Saltimbanco" appeared in Ottawa under a white big top seating 2500 in October and November as an out-of-town try out for the new Asian tour which began in Sidney, Australia in January 1999. The advance work for this trek was done out of an office in Singapore which opened in January 1998 with a staff of 40. It was announced that "Alegria" would be the permanent show at the Beau Rivage Casino in Biloxi, Mississippi which was scheduled to open in the spring of 1999.

On October 19 "O" opened at the Bellagio Casino in Las Vegas. Written and directed by Franco Dragone, who had headed up six previous Soleil productions, the show was named after the phonetic pronunciation of the French word for water, "eau," and was inspired by the "concept of infinity," if you can believe that. This behemoth took place in and on a 1.5 million gallon swimming pool, 150 feet long by 100 feet wide, covered by a stage for part of the show. The audience sat in an 1800 seat theater which looked like a European opera house. The ninety minute, seventy-five person show

combined swimming and diving with traditional circus routines, melded into the trademark Soleil weirdness. By all accounts, the show, whose tickets sold for \$90 and \$100, was hugely popular. Blast from the past department: Allen Gold, the former cat trainer, was in charge of the underwater scuba performers in "O."

In late December "La Nouba," which meant to party or live it up in French, opened at Disney World in a 1671 seat theater which looked like a tent. As part of its twelve year agreement with Soleil, Disney built and owned the theater which was intended to be an evening attraction for tourists. The ninety minute show featured high wire, trapeze, chair balancing, and a strap act, all of which was Soleilized with exotic costumes, lighting, and sound.

New York Times ad for Cirque du Soleil's engagement at Battery Park in Manhattan. Author's collection.

The Carson and Barnes Circus, headed by the legendary D. R. Miller and his family, opened in Texas in late March. Eschewing its traditional route, the troupe went east, landing in New England by June's end. By late July the company was back in its familiar

Midwest stomping grounds where it remained until October when it headed south and then west for a November 8 closing in Texas. It traversed 14,795 miles in 34 weeks, playing 25 two and three day engagements and one of four days for Bridgeport, Connecticut's Barnum Festival. It moved on 44 show-owned vehicles and 45 privately owned ones.

It was a difficult season as the Eastern territory, on the itinerary for the first time, created logistical problems and wasn't as remunerative as hoped. Circus matriarch Isla Miller's

October death was another blow to morale. She had been at her husband Dory's side through the long history of triumphs and travails of the Kelly-Miller and Carson and Barnes Circuses, and actually ran Kelly-Miller while brothers Dory and Kelly Miller were overseas fighting World War II.

Under the big top's five rings appeared Larry Allen Dean with the cats; the Gonzales, Marcos, and Ramirez families on perch pole; Cindi Cavallini with the Friesian stallions; Liubov Koudriavtseva with bears; Jesse Millar with camels; Lisa Frisco with dogs; the Flying Salazars and the Flying Cavallinis; the Dotsenko family in jump rope and Russian bar routines; Tim Frisco with the elephants; and numerous Chinese performers in typical Asian acts. John Moss III was ringmaster and the music was on tape. It was the first time Russian actors had appeared with the company. Fifteen elephants were carried, the most of any circus. A baby pachyderm was born at the show's Hugo, Oklahoma winter quarters in September, an up note in an otherwise forgettable year.

The Clyde Beatty and Cole Bros. Circus, the other major traveling tent, started its season in its Deland, Florida winter home in late March. Playing its traditional route up and down the East Coast, the I-95 Circus, as it was fondly nicknamed, rarely strayed too far from the ocean. It played as far north as Plattsburgh, New York and as far west as Muscle Shoals, Alabama before ending the year at Naples, Florida in late November. The 27 show-owned vehicles saw 10,441 miles of pavement as the troupe played 67 two-day stands, 28 of three days, 5 of four days and one of five in fourteen states.

I have seen the future and its vinyl: The big news from Beatty was its new big top. Designed by owner John Pugh, the plastic tent had two rows of four center poles each. Seating 3400, the top had no quarter poles to obstruct the audience's view. Management estimated the pavilion, measuring 105' by 275', would last ten seasons. New lighting and sound equipment were also purchased, making the overall effect dazzling.



Brightly painted Carson and Barnes ticket wagon. Fred D. Pfening, Jr. photo.

Acts appearing under the new top included Khrist Allen with the tigers, the Kraftsovs on the Russian barre, Gloria Bale with six liberty horses, the Elizarov Air Force flying return and casting act, Brad Jewell with six elephants, Juan Rodriguez in the wheel of death, Andrei and Svetlana Kraftsov with dogs, the Casolinos clowns in a funny car routine, Diana Kupchik with hula hoops, and Eli Tcholakian as Raven the human cannonball. Jimmy James was the ringmaster and Leigh Ketchum and Michelle Durval were the band.

The Cole Bros. portion of the title was emphasized over the Clyde Beatty part, perhaps signaling a title change. The show canceled two of five performances in Pensacola and completely blew Mobile in late September due to Hurricane Georges. The Nashville Humane Association sponsored the company in early October, a refreshing contrast from the typically adversarial relationship between circuses and

Midway of Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros. Circus in Rye, New Hampshire in June. Chuck Druding photo.



animal welfare groups. The sale of Beatty Bucks, vouchers for concessions purchased with credit cards, were up 50% since their introduction two years ago.

Sterling and Reid Bros. started in March in Texas and closed in California in

October. In between it played the West, the Mountain states and the Midwest with dates in California in both the spring and fall, a rarity. On June 18 in West Salem, Wisconsin, high winds caused a blow down and seat collapse which left the big top in shreds and some other equipment mangled. Several audience members had to be hospitalized. The troupe side-walled it until the tent could be repaired. The third biggest traditional tent, the show toured 17,442 miles in thirty-one weeks with thirty-seven multiple day stands, the longest being four days in Las Vegas in October. Owners Ian and Dick Garden apparently had a bang-up year as their marketing emphasis on free childrens' tickets was a winner.

The exhibition included clown Coco Kramer, the Nunuz and Galeretta families on perch poles, Christine Zerbini with hula hoops and on the aerial lyre, Martin Espana, Jr. on the wheel of death, and the Espana family on the Russian swing. Brian Franzen worked the cat and elephant acts. When the season began he also worked a pony drill, but less than a month into the route they were seized by animal welfare officials in San Bernardino, California.



Big top spool truck on Sterling and Reid Bros. Circus at Grove City, Ohio in July. Fred D. Pfening, Jr. photo.

Melinda Makey, a true breaded lady who worked the pre-show warm up, also left the show before closing. Ringmaster Brian LaPalme said good bye to the business after the season to take a town job.

Circus Vargas rarely strayed from California, although the itinerary included an engagement in Las Vegas in early October. Throughout the year rumors swirled about that owners Roland Kaiser and Joe Muscarello were selling the company to a group headed by former Ringling-Barnum executives Charles Smith, Allen Bloom and Susannah Smith. Among the talent under the single-ring big top were Susan Lacey with the Hawthorn white tigers, Chip Arthurs with a big and little act, Giovanni and Irene Anastasini with diabolos, Lurvic and Elena Shuken on aerial straps, musical clown Italo Fornasari, Diane Arthurs with liberty ponies, Fafael and Isabel Abuhadba with poodles, and Chip and Diane Arthurs with Benny the elephant.

The Big Apple Circus, the Masterpiece Theatre of the arenic universe, started the year in March in Atlanta, a new town on the route. Boston, metropolitan New York City, Chicago and Cleveland followed before a string of New England dates before the summer tour ended at Shelburne, Vermont in late July. When Big Apple and UniverSoul Circus day and dated in Atlanta, it was the first time two field shows had played the Georgia capital simultaneously since Ringling Bros. and Pawnee Bill in 1908. It was also the first circus to host both the CHS and CFA conventions in the same year. The fall-winter season began in late September in Ruston,

Virginia. The glorious Lincoln Center run in mid-town Manhattan followed from late October to early 1999. Half the year's revenue was generated during the run.

The spring-summer production was a reprise of the 1997 winter offering which celebrated the troupe's twentieth anniversary. It featured the Flying Jimenez, Bill Woodcock with his elephants, juggler Arturo Alegria, Katja Schumann with her father and son with liberty horses, Elena Serafimovich on aerial rings, David Dimitri on the low wire, baton twirler Natalie Enterline, and clowns Bello Nock and Barry Lubin. Lubin and his wonderful character Grandma left the show after the summer tour.

The Lincoln Center extravaganza was entitled "Happy On." Produced by show founder Paul Binder and directed by Guy Caron and Michael Christensen, the performers included the Lianoning acrobatic troupe in pole and hoop diving routines; Ella Levitskaya with her dogs; Katja Schumann with liberty horses; William and Shannon Woodcock with the elephants Ned, Amy and the venerable Anna May; wire walker Molly Saudek; Julian Stachowski and Regina Dobrovitskaya in a hand balancing act; and Vladimir and Olga Kurziamov in an aerial display.

Norman Barrett, an old-pro from

Norman Barrett, the British ringmaster, was the feature of the Big Apple Circus. He is shown here working his bird act. Paul Gutheil photo.



England's Bertram Mills and Blackpool Tower Circuses, was guest ringmaster, and presented a terrific bird act. Bello Nock and Emmanuel Liadouze were clowns. Brigitte Laroche composed the music and Uli Geissendoerfer conducted the eight-member band.

Low wire walker Molly Saudek exemplified the new career path which was becoming more and more common. Rather than learning her trade as part of a family act on an American or Mexican mud show or at an Eastern European circus school, she was introduced to the business when she enrolled Circus Smirkus at age 11. Later, she matriculated at the National Circus School in Montreal, the farm system for Cirque du Soleil, where she learned wire walking. Stints followed on Pan Twilight, Cirque Eloize, and Cirque du Soleil, and at the famous Tiger Palast in Frankfurt, Germany. In January 1998 she won a silver medal at the Festival Mondial du Cirque de Demain in Paris where she presumably caught the attention of the Big Apple talent scouts. No Allen Bros. or King Royal on her resume, she was the poster child for the new circus.

Circus Chimera, produced and owned by Jim Judkins, former Carson & Barnes executive, was the most noble new circus of the decade, comparing favorably with shows such as the Monte Carlo Circus of 1977, and the Tim McCoy Wild West of 1938 that also cut a new path. The first circus to combine the physical and marketing aspects of mud shows with the production values of new wavers, it looked like a million dollars on the lot and like Soleil in the ring. While it suffered at the box office as a result of an ineffectual front end, it regularly received standing ovations, rave reviews, great word of mouth, and repeat business.

After opening in Texas in late April, the company headed west, reaching California in early June where it stayed until the closing in late November. The troupe traveled 4038 miles with the longest stands being 35 days in San Francisco and 34 days in Oakland. Moving on about twenty show-owned vehicles and about twenty more owned by the personnel, it brought culture to the

hinterlands as it was the most sophisticated live entertainment to ever appear in many of the small towns on the route.

The midway was mud show all the way with kiddie train and car rides, two moon bounces, a midget horse display, a reptile and spider show, and a concession wagon. The audience, however, left Kansas and conventional circus once it entered the big top. The performance's story line was about a clown finding a magical box which was filled with toys which came to life and performed. Among the acts were clown Robert Bruce, the Chimal family in tumbling and teeterboard, foot juggler Xiaohong Wu, Carmen Rosales in a butterfly act, the Alexanders in the globe of death, Ginger Griep-Ruis in a Russian strap routine, the Rosales family on perch poles and in the double wheel of death, and the Flying Rodogels on the Russian swing and on the flying trapeze. There was no ringmaster as each act flowed into the next. Original music, albeit on tape, accompanied the displays. The first class lighting, costumes, and sound all reflected the values of the new circus. It was, as one reviewer noted with affection, "Soleil without an attitude." Things looked brighter at year's end as Judkins announced that Dick Garden, the marketing whiz from Sterling and Reid Bros., had been hired to run the advance.

The UniverSoul Big Top Circus played nineteen major urban centers starting with its Atlanta home in March and concluding in Houston in November. In between came a host of other big towns across the country. It was the first black-owned American circus in almost four decades and the first ever to use mainly African-American personnel, both in and out of the ring. The company marketed almost exclusively to the black community, although founder Cedric Walker expressed his hope that the show would become cross-over entertainment as had the music from Motown Records in the 1960s.

Blending traditional circus with African-American culture

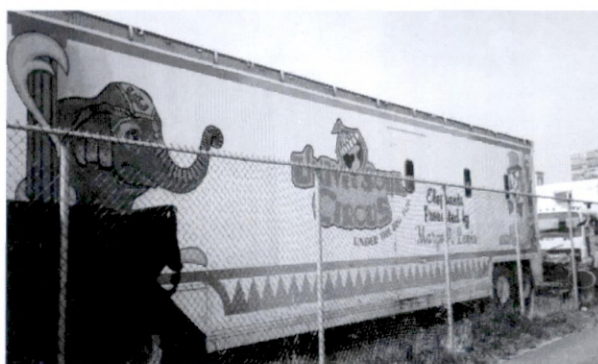


All of Circus Chimera's semi trailers were painted in the same white motif with air brushed art. It was the year's most physically beautiful show. Jerry Cash photo.

produced a fascinating and wonderfully entertaining performance which rated both classic soul music and the ideology of the self-help movement. An unrepentant bourgeois message, emphasizing the values of parental obedience, drug abstinence, and hard work, was evidenced throughout the exhibition.

The production was first class with excellent lighting and sound under a 2500 seat, one-ring top formerly owned by Big Apple. Among the artists were the King Charles unicycle troupe, aerialist Pamela Hernandez, the Ayak brothers on the trapeze, the Willy family on the high wire, Jean Claude Beimat in a strap act, contortionist Princess Naya-kata, the Kenyan Black Wizards acrobatic troupe, clown Danise Payne, Tahar the alligator wrestler, Margo Porter Lewis and Ramon Esqueda with the George Carden elephants, and Monique Angeon with

UniverSoul Circus elephant semi in Newark, New Jersey in the spring. Paul Gutheil photo.



the cats. Angeon was promoted as the world's first black female wild animal trainer, and maybe she was. Ringmaster "Casual Cal" Dupree, the show's co-founder, had far more interaction with the audience than his brethren, often leading it in chants or imparting life lessons. He was assisted by Zander Charles aka Zeke. The music was on tape.

The Kelly-Miller Circus, opened in its hometown of Hugo, Oklahoma in late March, then headed in Texas, the border states, and the Midwest. The road back home went through Missouri, Oklahoma, and Texas. The tour put almost 8200 miles on the fourteen show-owned odometers. A one-night-stand opera, it played only ten 2-day dates and four 3-dayers. The midway was typical of small mud-shows with an elephant ride, pony ride, moon bounce, a snake show, menagerie, ticket wagon, and concession trailer. Co-owner and manager David Rawls stated the season was good.

Under the 130' by 140' vinyl big top appeared the Perez family on the flying trapeze, the Russian swing, and the wheel of death; Myrna Silverlake with her dogs; Cindy Herriott Wells with liberty horses and later a dressage act; Stephanie Darr on swinging ladder; Vanessa Kiss on hula hoops and trapeze; juggler Raul Olivares; and Roy Wells with three elephants. Brett Hood was ringmaster and a two person band accompanied the acts. The show's clowns were Kelly E. Rawls, Thomas Sink, and Nick Weber, the last a Jesuit priest and former head of the Royal Liechtenstein Circus.

Bentley Bros. Circus bought its first tent, but had trouble with it early in the year when the new top could not withstand Miami's wind. The tent was sent back to A-1 Tent in Sarasota, Florida, the manufacturer, while the show appeared in a top leased from Walker Bros. The tent problems were resolved before the show's fifteen vehicles hit the Midwest, East and upper South before closing in

Roanoke, Virginia in late September. In-ring personnel included Bob Moyer with five ligers and later camels, Diane Moyer with dogs and later elephants, Jack Cook with his comedy car, Zan Yen Lu in juggling and unicycles routines, the Ali Hamid tumblers, and the Murcia troupe on the high wire. Scott Taylor was ringmaster, and Walt and Millie Stimax were clowns. Bentley owners Tommy Bentley and Chuck Clancey toured the Mark Charles Holiday Revue, a phone-promoted hybrid magic show-circus, in the East in late November and December. Talent on this run included ventriloquist Dan Christopher, Carmen Hall with her baboons, hula hooper Elena Arestov, rola bolaer Simon Arestov, the Risleying Andres Ramos family, and hand balancers Aigual and Joldosh Usenbokovi. Jerry Eyestone was announcer.

Roberts Bros. Circus, headed by Doris Earl and her family, saw the South, Midwest and East from March to October, going as far west as Ohio and as far north as Maine. The company appeared in fifteen states and traveled about 11,500 miles. It was its twenty-fifth season, making its size and longevity comparable to Sig Sautelle or Frank A. Robbins. The midway had an elephant ride, and moon bounce, the latter a ubiquitous attraction on front ends.

The following artists displayed their skills beneath the 1400 seat big top: Amy Riccio in a cloud swing and with trained poodles, Bob Earl with a long rein horse and a liberty act, Steve Jensak on Roman rings, Heidi and Kurt Casady on the perch pole, Heidi Casady in a foot juggling routine, Ken Benson in a mule act and with Lisa the elephant, and juvenile juggler Allan James Davis. Ringmaster Jim Davis doubled as cook house steward. At season's end, the Casadys retired from the business to pursue town jobs.

The Culpepper and Merriweather Circus opened in Arizona in early March and played the West through July when it plowed into the Great Plains states. By September the troupe was in Texas and Oklahoma before heading home through New Mexico for a mid-October closing in

Arizona. The personnel saw seventeen different states. The show played three locations on three consecutive days in Tucson in March, a throwback to what Gentry Bros. did in Chicago nearly a hundred years ago. Owner Robert "Red" Johnson was ahead of the troupe on the advance; a successful season resulted.

The performers included fire eater Jerry Bradley, the Edgar Ayala family in a Risley routine, Julio and Sigrid DeAlva on the high wire, clown Jimmy Vaughn, Lauren Fairchild with snakes, hula hooper Arlini Ayala, and Mike Swain with the African elephants Connie and Barbara and later with a liberty dromedary. Ringmaster Bobby Fairchild also performed a western act with his wife Lauren. A two-person band provided the music.

Walker Bros. Circus, owned by John Walker Jr., opened with the late February to mid-March Medinah Shrine Temple engagement in Chicago, a rarity among mud shows. It then played about a month and a half of indoor dates before finally tenting it in early May with an 80 foot by 150 foot top that sat about 1500. Much of the season was spent in the Midwest before the late October closing.

The Chicago presentation included Pam Rosaire and Roger Zoppe with their chimps, the Flying Vargas in flying return and teeterboard routines, the Estoykov troupe on perch poles, Ron and Joy Holiday in their Cat Dancers display, Gaylord Maynard with his horse Chief Bear Paw, comedy trampoliner Don Otto, and the Dancing Gauchos. For the first time in years, if not ever, the date did not have an elephant act. Tim Tegge was ringmaster; Dave Williams was clown; and Lee Maloney directed the band. In past years, Bozo the clown had been Medinah's big draw; this year it was Yogi Bear, Fred Flint-



Roberts Bros. cookhouse trailer in Merrimack, New Hampshire in August. Chuck Druding photo.

stone and other cartoon characters.

The touring company's program included the Tino Cristiani family on the trampoline, John Walker III with three elephants leased from John Cuneo, juggler Santino Zamperla, the Zamperla family in unicycle and bareback routines, and the Stoykov family on the perch pole. Ringmaster Bill Brickle also presented his poodles. Some of the Chicago cast, such as Pam Rosaire and Roger Zoppe, appeared at the indoor dates in March and April.

Starr Bros. Circus operated incognito; only a handful of its dates were recorded. It was in Kentucky and southern Indiana in May, and Wisconsin later in the summer where it was reported the big top was blown down. It didn't use semis to move, thus avoiding weigh stations. The show took place in two rings and carried animals no more exotic than a camel and zebra for approximately the first half of the year. During the summer some of the Plunkett family's elephants joined the show.

Culpepper and Merriweather Circus setting up at Seal Beach, California in April. Jerry Cash photo.



Owner John "Gopher" Davenport had an indoor show in Louisiana, and elsewhere, in December. Veteran Dick Johnson was on this trek. The title was unknown, but was probably something such as Cavalcade of Cartoon Circus Stars, a moniker used in previous years.

The show changed its name for the season, having been King Royal for many years before. Much of the company's secrecy stemmed from the 1997 death of an African elephant named Heather in Albuquerque, New Mexico. In August, Albuquerque city officials bought Irene, another elephant confiscated at the time of Heather's death, from Allan Hill who had leased her to Davenport. At that time, the city was in the process of taking permanent possession of a third elephant and some llamas owned by Davenport. In August the circus was challenging the USDA's revocation of its exotic animal license.

Vidbel's Olde Tyme Circus rambled around the East for twenty-four weeks from early May to late October. The season, the company's fifteenth, was a milestone as founders Al and Joyce Vidbel, semi-retired, turning over the daily management chores to daughters Susan and Jennifer. Featured in the one-ring performance were clowns Mike Snider and Billy Vaughn, Jens Larson on Roman rings, Susan Vidbel with birds and later in a cloud swing, juggler and rola bolaist Pat Davison, contortionists Aijen and Aigul Usembekovi, James Hall with his bears, Jennifer Vidbel with her dressage horse Ebony, Dusty Sadler with his dogs, and the Kazakhstan State Circus Cossack riders. Daniel McCallum was ringmaster and Wynn Murrah had the band. Overall, the performance was excellent for a small, under canvas trucker.

The Alain Zerbini Circus hurried from April to October in the Midwest, South and East. Eschewing its big top whenever a roofed facility was available, the company played both indoor and outdoor engagements.

Among the sawdust stars were the Padilla duo with illusions, and owner Alain Zerbini's family with a barnyard act con-



Poster for John Davenport's Starr Bros. Circus. Ted Bowman collection.

sisting of three pigs, four duck and a small dog. Other acts included a poodle routine, trapeze, and hula hoops. Melody Zerbini was ringmistress and the music was on tape. The show carried no caged animals or elephants, just lead stock.

Allen Bros. Circus opened on March 2, playing at least Texas and the Great Plains states. The one-ringer moved on two cattle trailers, a long flat bed trailer with the bleachers and tent poles, a concession-office trailer and five RV's. Its midway had a petting zoo with emus, goats and a house cat who probably hated being petted. Among the performers were Michael Costano with a pony act and a juggling routine; and Earlynn Bedford, wife of owner Allen Bedford, with the lions and tigers. Felipe Reyes led the band. The show played Fairbury, Nebraska, home to the

Interior of Alain Zerbini Circus tent in Sheboygan Falls, Wisconsin in July. Timothy N. Tegge photo.



Campbell Bros. Circus a hundred years ago, in late June. Two days before Fairbury, it played Dewitt, Nebraska where it was the first circus to appear in over fifty years.

Hendricks Bros. Circus was back among the living after taking off the 1997 season, touring the South and East from June to August. Owner Bob Childress made a deal with Billy Martin in which Martin supplied the performance with personnel from his school show, and Childress the physical equipment. It all moved behind eighteen steering wheels. The midway had a pony sweep, moon bounce, a kiddie high striker and a combination concession trailer and office-ticket wagon. The performance took place under a one ring top, a 70 foot round top with a 40 foot middle piece which sat 700. Sawdust stars included Joanne Wilson with her poodles, jugglers Emil and Debbie Goetschi, Kim Sue Valla on web, clown Paul Parsons, Angela Martin on trapeze, sword balancer Paul Valencia, Vlastek Valla on comedy trampoline. The tour wasn't a smashing success as hot whether hurt the box office.

The L. A. Circus played its namesake city and its environs from the spring to at least the fall. Headed by Wini McKay and Chester Cable, the company appeared under a 145 foot by 77 foot big top. Among the talent at a four day run at the famed Los Angeles Farmers' Market in May were Rebecca Perez on single trapeze, hula hooper Brittney Starr, the Vita family of acrobats, Darlene Williams on web, foot juggler Chester Cable, Bonnie West in a western routine, Dextre Tripp on the slack wire, and Gary and Kari Johnson with one of their elephants. Lee Maloney had a four piece band. The Johnsons, who often appeared with this show, had two elephant born at their compound during the summer.

Circus Flora was in its hometown of St. Louis in May, in Dallas in September, and Scottsdale, Arizona in December. The Flying Wallendas, headed by Tino Wallenda-Zoppe, did the seven person pyramid at all three locations. Other actors were aerialist Giovanni

Zoppe, cloud swinger Sacha Pavlata and ringmistress Cecil MacKinnon. The brainchild of founder David Balding, the show's theme focused on magic and myth. This one hardly made an ink spot in the trade press, which is a shame because it was one of the most creative and innovative troupes on the road this decade, combining elements of the new circus such as a strong story line with traditional acts under a one ring tent.

The American Crown Circus, owned by the Osario family, tramped around Nevada, Arizona and California early in the year. A side walled affair, it encountered bad weather and bad business at many stands. Nothing was known of the performance except that Harmen Lyzenga was ringmaster. In early October, when the family had time off from Circus Circus Casino where they performed, the show was out again with a spot date in Las Vegas using the Circus Osario title. They picked a bad time as they day and dated both Sterling & Reid, and Circus Vargas.

Franzen Bros. Circus had its last gasp early in the year when owner Brian Franzen took an under canvas mini-performance through Florida for seventeen days, going as far south as Key West. The show did big business in a Hispanic town on Super Bowl Sunday, management correcting figuring that the locals weren't football fans. Soon after, Franzen joined Sterling & Reid to present his animal acts.

Circuses were often parts of fairs and festivals, usually as free attractions. With a few exceptions they were small undertakings, usually one ringers giving about an hour's entertainment, either under a big top or in front of a grandstand. While a number of Shrine producers pursued this brand of tanbark during the summer when the temple business was slow, a few others specialized in this variant of sawdust commerce.

The Liebel Family Circus worked from at least May to September in the Midwest. Playing mainly small fairs and festivals, the troupe used a tent seating about 1000. The per-



Walker Bros. Circus concession trailer at Delavan, Wisconsin in August. Bill Rhodes photo.

formance included the Fernando Bautista family in contortion, juggling, web and acrobatics; Tony Liebel with the elephant Nosey, rola bola and high wire routines; and Franceska Liebel with liberty horses. Owner Tommi Liebel worked a monkey and horse, and did his one man band. Phil Dolci was ringmaster.

The Circo de Espectacular Garcia recorded at least two Shrine and one fair bookings; one assumes there were others. In April the company appeared under a new vinyl big top for the Lexington, Kentucky Shrine where the acts were presented on an elevated stage rather than in a ring. While the Garcia family put on most of the show, Tommi Liebel appeared with his elephant. When the circus played a Labor Day festival in Pennsylvania, the talent was heavy

Poster for the Liebel Family Circus at Durand, Michigan in September. Paul Butler collection.

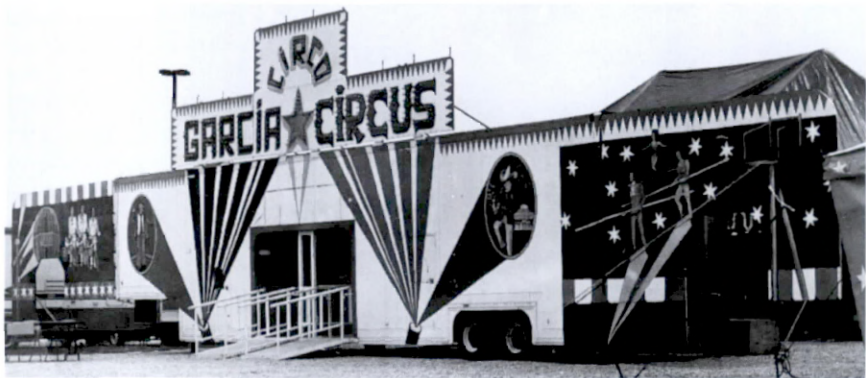


on the Garcia with Oscar wire walking, Aaron clowning, and Ceista hula hooping. The season was financially difficult as an ad appeared in *Circus Report* at year's end offering the equipment for sale, including the big top.

The Family Fun Circus played about a dozen California fairs from April to October, moving on two trucks and two trailers. Owners Edward Russell and Stephen Michaels put on most of the tented display. Russell's turns included trained birds and magic; Michaels', chair balancing, juggling and announcing. In early July a blow out caused one of the trucks and trailers to jack knife on the freeway. Both were a total loss, but the tent, seats and poles they were carrying were saved. The tour was finished with a rented truck and trailer.

The Backyard Circus, owned by Bill Carpenter, had multiple units at fairs including the Canadian National Exposition in Toronto, the Texas State Fair in Dallas, and the Erie County Fair near Buffalo. A side walled exhibition, it also appeared at amusement parks in Virginia, California, and North Carolina during the summer. Recruiting children from the audience, the show gave them a crash course in circus arts, then had them stage the performance. This one deserved some kind of award for playing the most oddball events as it was part of a rib cook off, an oyster festival, and a tomato festival.

Circus Hollywood, owned by Serge Coronas, appeared at a fair in Syracuse in late summer and at the Alabama State Fair in October. The forty-five minute presentation at Syracuse featured the Flying Lunas in their flying return and Russian swing routines, and human cannonballer Luis Munoz. Barry and Jan Yienst's Magic Circus mesmerized audiences at New York and Pennsylvania fairs with their little tent. They also had a school show out in the spring and fall. Called the Indoor Circus Spectacular on the fall trek through Tennessee and North Carolina, the performance included Marie Franz in juggling and dog routines, D. V. and Dianne Wilson with seal lions and birds, clowns Greg



Circo Garcia had an outdoor Shrine date at Frankfort, Kentucky in April. Bill Rhodes photo.

and Karen DeSanto, and Danny Carey and Tavana Luvas in chair balancing and Roman ring acts. Dorian Blake was ringmaster.

Circus Continental, produced by Peggy Klein Kaltenbach, had circuses at fairs in Ohio and Michigan in August. The program read Bobby Steele with bears and elephants, the Fabulous Darnells with illusions and poodles, Danny Carey atop the rola bola and chair balancing, foot juggler Victoria Lee, the Vargas family on teeterboard and flying trapeze, and comedy trampoliner Don Otto. Rick Legg was ringmaster. The Circus of Thrills at a Massachusetts fair in June. Producer Tino Wallenda-Zoppe and his family presented the high wire act. Other talent included Sacha Pavlata and Aurelia Wallenda in a double cloud swing, and Andrea Wallenda with her poodles.

Happytime Circus played a few California midways with its one ring show. Owners Dave and Judy Twomey were fined \$15,000 and their license to exhibit animals was suspended for 120 days by the USDA in August. Swan Bros. Circus brightened Golden State fairs under a blue and white stripe square end tent. Brothers Andy and Mike Swan put on the entire show which included juggling, trapeze, balloon art and a high dive dog. During the summer, Andy Swan won all five juggling race competitions at the International Jugglers Association convention in Nevada.

Dwight Damon produced the All Star Circus for a New Hampshire fair in September. Performers included Tina Winn in a slide for life, jug-

gler and low wirer Dieter Galambos, chair balancer Shane Wright, hula hooper Eleana Arestov, the Galambos' soccer playing dogs, and John and Tina Winn on the inclined motorcycle. Nicole Wright was ringmistress. Damon apparently used the Circus Kamala title on other dates. The Fearless Flores Show appeared with the Reithoffer Carnival in Philadelphia in May. All the displays, including sway pole, dog and globe of death acts, were put on by Victor Flores and his family.

George Barreda had his circus at the Mississippi State Fair in October. The Zoppe Mini Circus enlivened a Pennsylvania fair in September. Producer Davide Zoppe presented his monkeys while wife Susan Sheryll displayed her dogs and son Justino Zoppe juggled. Harvey Smith produced the Guilford Fair Family Circus in Connecticut in September. Arenic stars included juggler Alfonso Esqueda, the Loyal-Repensky riders, the Esqueda family on the teeterboard, and the Geraldo family on the high wire. Mike Sayers was ringmaster. The Short Attention Span Circus, a micro production, entertained children at western fairs. Insensitive wags cracked it was framed for kids with ADD.

The All Star Super Circus was at a Michigan fair in August. Performers included GiGi Tegge with her rope act, Gordon and Vicki Howle with their dogs and foot juggling, and clown Tim Tegge. Owner Peter Sturgis with his wife June did illusions. Cirque Parasol appeared at the Pacific National Exhibition at Vancouver, British Columbia in August and September. A new waver, it featured juggling, acrobatics, clowning, high wire, and flying trapeze. The Noah Espana family put on

a thrill circus called Extreme Boulevard at the Venice, Florida Sports Arena, the former Ringling-Barnum quarters, during the summer as part of the Venice Shark's Tooth Festival. The show had a Broadway feel to it and included bareback riding on a motorcycle, and wheelies on a Bobcat.

Petting zoos were a fixture on fair grounds. While their origins can be traced to the great traveling menageries of the early nineteenth century, their popularity stemmed from the urbanization of American society which made common farm animals a novelty to citified kids. Most shows offered a combination of exotic and barnyard animals from elephants and camels to sheep and goats. The Microsoft of the genre was Commerford and Sons, headed by Bob Commerford, which had its big petting zoo at numerous eastern fairs. Among its animals was Dickie the giraffe, a Ringling-Barnum alumnus. Another big player was the Jim Phillips Petting Zoo which had Milwaukee's Great Circus Parade and the Ohio State Fair on its itinerary. Others included Joe Frisco's Circus and Petting Zoo; Ken Lasalle's Ken Jen Petting Zoo; Ray Ordaz's Royo's Petting Zoo; and Maura Ropusa's, Sue Tooley's and April Ford's Great American Petting Zoo.. A variant of this type of exhibition was Jim Lavender's Circus Hope which despite its name was a petting zoo that played about 50 locations. It used the animals to teach the gospel and illustrate Bible stories.

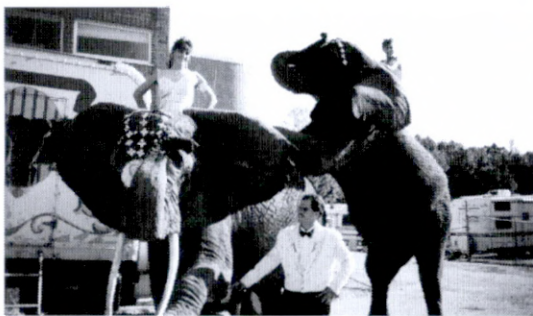
An increasing number of field show performers, particularly those with trained exotic animals, worked as single attractions at fairs. Othmar Vohringer had the fifteen Hawthorn white tigers at an Ontario fair in September, and Yaro and Barbara Hoffman had their Exotic and Endangered Cats of the World display on numerous show grounds. Other animal shows included Lee and Judy Stevens' Baboon Lagoon, Jeanette Rix's Big Bear Ranch, Khris Allen's Adriatic Animal Exhibition, Bill Morris' Elephant Encounter, and Donn J. Moyer's Reptile Safari. Gary Noel's Doggies of the Wild West was booked at western fairs. Among all-human acts on midways were the

Nerveless Nocks who appeared at the Hawaii State Fair in the spring.

The side show was still a common site on fair grounds if not circuses. The doyen of side showmen was the venerable Ward Hall, in his 83rd year on the road, whose extravaganza appeared at many fairs. Other side showmen included John Strong Jr., and Bobby Reynolds. While fair grounds side shows carried almost no true human oddities, their novelty acts continued to appeal to the public. The more bizarre and grotesque elements migrated from the midway to rock and roll clubs catering to Gen-Xers and teens.

About a score of tiny, mostly one ring, circuses performed in small, indoor spaces. Most offered familiar fare, and generally marketed themselves by the use of free childrens' tickets. A few functioned as fund raisers for charities or service clubs, such as veterans groups and PTAs which were too small to book larger attractions. Called "school shows" in the vernacular of the trade because of their proclivity to perform in school auditoriums and gyms, these aggregations usually marched during the first and last parts of the year, usually in step with the school schedule, and usually playing short itineraries in smaller towns. They filled the role of the nineteenth century wagons shows which plied their trade at county seats and crossroads towns.

The Royal Palace Circus was one of the most successful and established shows of its kind. Performing through the South, East and Midwest from January to November with a break in September, the neatly framed trick moved on three semis, one straight bed truck, one pickup, two campers and two small trailers. When it appeared in Pittsfield, Massachusetts in March the actors consisted of Bill Bannister with his dogs, Irvin Hall with his baboons, the Frank Galambos duo in rola bola and aerial cradle displays, Traci Bannister on aerial lyre, and Tom Thompson and Dionne Arata with Baby Nickolaus the bicycle riding elephant. Kimball Keller was ringmaster, and the music was taped



Jorges Pages of Circus Pages with his wife and daughter on the elephants. Cam Cridlebaugh photo.

as it was on almost all school shows. Harry Dubsy, Jr. was manager.

The Great Sarasota Circus, a second unit, opened in January. It was scheduled for only an eight week tour; however, business was good enough to justify another eight weeks. Artists included Jose Valencia with miniature horses, the Dunderdales in juggling and unicycle routines, and Skin and Bones with dog, juggling and plate spinning acts. Brad Lee Perkl was ringmaster. Harry Dubsy, Sr. managed the show.

Circus Pages entertained audiences in the Midwest and South from January to at least October. Playing mostly armories, this show had a huge consist of animals for a troupe its size including two elephants, two camels, six ponies, a llama, a horse, eleven dogs, three lions and two tigers. Displays included the Posso duo in foot juggling and on the low wire, Fred Logan with the African elephants Daisy and Bambi, Vincenta Pages on Roman rings and liberty ponies, and Frieda Pages on web. Owner Jorge Pages worked the cat act. Ringmaster James Earhart also juggled and presented his poodles.

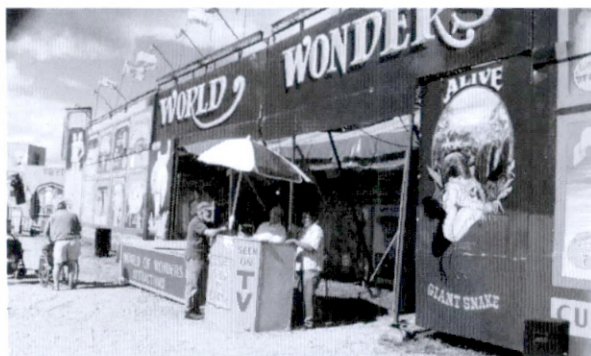
The Famous Cole Circus marched through seven states in the Midwest and upper South for about ten weeks in both the spring and fall. Featuring a Star Wars theme called Super Galactic Space Spectacular, the program included Antonio and Paula Valencia in aerial

cradle, Margaret Valencia with dogs, Paula Valencia in sword balancing, and Ignacia and Margaret Valencia with illusions. Ringmaster Pedro Morales also chair balanced. Javier Martinez with his boxing kangaroo made only the spring trek while Karina and Julio Piccolo with their rag doll routine were on the fall roster. Shelia and Pedro Morales were

road managers. Owned by Ron and Willene Bacon and Larry and Cheryl Allmon, the company had a fair spring run, but business was off in the fall, in part because of increased competition. This was one of the few school shows to still use sponsors and telemarketing as most outfits eschewed them for the ubiquitous free kids' ticket.

Ray MacMahon routed his show in the Midwest early in the year, in Florida in June, in Texas in September, and presumably elsewhere at other times. In January the company was called the Great European Circus, probably unaware it was one of the greatest titles in American field show history. When it was in a Richmond, Indiana armory in January the stars included Jennifer Vidbel with her miniature horses, and Christine de Leon (aka Dubsy) with her poodle fashion show. Paul Dean was ringmaster. By April, the Royal American Circus title was in use as in past seasons, and by the time the troupe reached the Dallas area in September, the program listed Bela Tabak with peacocks, a big and little act, snakes, and

Ward Hall's and Chris Christ's World of Wonders side show was one of the biggest on the road. It appears here at the Saratoga, New York county fair. Paul Gutheil photo.



a baby buffalo. Veteran Ray Chandler was the announcer.

The Cole All Star Circus' had a January to June run in the East with 50% new towns on the route, quite a turnover for a company that had played the same upper New York state hamlets for years. Talent on this trek included Emil and Debbie Goetschi in juggling and western acts, Joanne Wilson with her poodles, Vlastek and Kim in aerial cradle, Angela Martin on trapeze, and clowns Kevin Ryan and Paul Parsons. Owner Billy Martin was ringmaster. While most of the work was in armories and schools, it also included a March 31-April 5 stint as the circus for the Harrisburg, Pennsylvania Shrine where Martin provided the talent and management for producer Tommy Hanneford. Starting in October, the show had another series of dates in the East with essentially the same displays.

The Yankee Doodle Circus toured the Northeast from February to April. Among the arenic features in the ninety minute exhibition were the John Hansen family with its roller skating, gorilla parody, and juggling turns; Gary Sladek in chair balancing, cloud swing and comedy trampoline; Gordon and Vicki Howle with dogs, foot juggling and trapeze; and clown Vladimir Augustova. Tosca Zoppe was ringmistress. It had a two person band, a rarity on school shows. Owner Mike Naughton called the show "America's Circus for Children," making it clear to whom he was marketing.

Valentine's Mighty American Circus worked about twenty-five weeks throughout the year, mainly in the South. Owned by Nicole and Ray Valentine, Jr., the company made liberal use of free kids' tickets and appeared at small town civic centers, fairground buildings, and the occasional armory. Among the performers were clowns Steven and Mary Reichel, Mario Zerbini with his globe of death, Maya Zerbini on the sin-

gle trapeze, and the Valencia family with their liberty ponies. No exotics were carried. Additionally, the Valentines provided the circus for Ray "Slick" Valentine, Sr.'s dates in Texas and Arkansas in the spring and Nebraska and Kansas in the fall, including at least one Shrine engagement.

Cathy Rogers had a number of mini-tours in the Midwest, Texas and the West throughout the year using generic titles such as Wonderful World of Magic, Marvelous Mystics on Parade, and the always popular if uninspired Santa's Christmas Show. She may have also used the Holiday Magic Show title, at least a show by that name which toured the West in December had the earmarks of being one of her productions. Acts on a California run in June included juggler Atsuko Koga, the bullwhip cracking Crowell family, hula hooper Brittney Starr, and clowns Chris Bricker, and Kevin and Robin Bickford. Garry Carson announced and did illusions, a common combination of skills for school showmen. Lee Maloney was tour manager and musical director. Later in June, Rogers produced a show in Dallas for Abbott Labs under a top rented from Tarzan Zerbini. This was a first rate

Free kids' tickets distributed by Ray MacMahon's Great European Circus, Harry Dubsky's Royal Palace, and Ron Morris' Variety Showcase Circus. Spotlight Graphics, Morris' company, printed the tickets. Author's and Chuck Druding collections.

affair as the talent included Andre Skarbecki with his lions, the Altier Archers, the Flying Condors, the Garza living statues, and Bobby Steele with the elephants.

The Piccadilly Circus, the winner of the wittiest title award, did about five weeks in the South at the first of the year. Performers included the Espanas on trampoline, clown Coco Kramer, and a Chinese troupe with lion dancing, unicycle, and cup and dish balancing turns. Brian LaPalme was ringmaster, and also did illusions and fire eating. The itinerary was abbreviated from past years, presumably so owners Ian and Richard Garden could concentrate on their other, bigger, circuses.

The American Family Circus had a spring run in the South and perhaps elsewhere. Displays included Ruby Victoria in a hair hang, illusionist Don Arthur, the foot juggling Altorras, Eric Adams with his dogs, and clown Bev Bergeron who also handled the announcing. Sara Miller, who headed the company after the early-year death of her husband Stu, presented her ponies. The Wonderland Circus awed crowds in Georgia and South Carolina for a month in January and February. Entertainers included the Javier Martinez family in Risley, comedy trampoline and boxing kangaroo routines; aerialist and foot juggler Ken Taylor; and Hans Klose in gorilla parody and sword balancing acts. Owner Bill Brickle was ringmaster and worked his ever-popular poodles.

The Reynolds Family Circus had about a month of sponsored dates in the spring and again in the fall in Kentucky, Illinois and Missouri, and summered at an Amish-themed amusement park in Illinois. The ninety minute show featured Eddie Steeples with his chimps, juggler Andy Martello, and magician Travis Green. This one's title was accurate as Bill Reynolds ringmastered, Jeanne Reynolds worked the phones, and owners Dan and Fay

FREE TICKET
ADMIT ONE CHILD 12 OR UNDER
GREAT EUROPEAN CIRCUS
HILLIARD
SAT • JAN 17
3:00 & 7:00 PM
FRANKLIN CO. FAIRGROUNDS • EDWARDS BLDG.
4100 COLUMBIA ST.

ADMIT 1 CHILD FREE
ROYAL PALACE CIRCUS
See the Funny Monkeys, Giant Snakes, Clowns, Jugglers, Acrobats, and The Lady That Hangs By Her Hair!
TUE • NOV 17
COLLIER CO. FAIRGROUNDS ARENA
Highway 846 • Naples
SHOWTIMES: 5:30 & 7:45 PM
Adults \$8.00 at the door
Available 1 hour prior to each show.

FREE TICKET
ADMIT ONE CHILD 14 & UNDER
See Aussie the Boxing Kangaroo
Trained Pets, Acrobats, Clowns, Jugglers, Circus Stunts and fun games!
VARIETY SHOWCASE CIRCUS
MON • OCT 12 • 5:30 & 8:00 PM
Concord City Auditorium
Hosted By: Capital Area Jaycees
Child must be accompanied by adult. Adult price at door \$7.00. Good for any show that is not filled to capacity. May not be sold or exchanged.

Reynolds played in the band. Cirque Leonardo appeared in Eastern Canada in the spring, mainly in French-speaking areas. The roster included Brett Marshall on his BMX bike, Shane Johnson with his family's tigers and elephants, Gary Sladek on the trampoline and on trapeze, and Bobby Besmenond in plate spinning and rola bola routines. Bobby Gibbs, who semi-retired from the business, made this run, assisting Johnson with the elephants.

Ron Morris, whose day job was printing circus posters and tickets, had out the Old Tyme Family Circus in the spring, and the Variety Showcase Circus in the fall, both in New England. Floyd Bradbury, the Art Concello of school show managers, was in charge of the fall tour. He also was the ringmaster, did ventriloquism, and had a boxing kangaroo named Aussie. Bradbury also had his own schooler out in the Midwest in the fall, using Byron Bowman's route and probably calling it the Magic Circus.

Professor Tegge's Circus Revue had a few dates in Wisconsin school gyms and other small venues in the fall. The program consisted of Gulnara Salakhova on aerial lyre and hula hoops, Oleg Gapon and Salakhova in a rag doll routine, Justin Sykes and Greg Larson in a juggling act, and GiGi Tegge in a rope spinning act. Owner Tim Tegge clowned, ate fire and presented illusions with wife GiGi. The Star Circus, partially owned by Roberto Zerbini, had a fifteen week tour starting in Florida in January. Routines included knockabout comedy, trained dogs, sword balancing, and Roman rings.

Circus Mystique was in Florida in January. The roster included Yvonne Savage on unicycle, Pat Davison in juggling and rola bola routines, and clowns Joe Schmitt and Michelle Malvern. Owner Vince Carmen did magic. From late summer to October he had an indoor troupe called the Vince Carmen Magic Revue out west with Yvonne Savage on unicycle. Father and son Remo and Max Bizarro had Circus Hope on a nine day run in Wisconsin in late September and early October. In-

ring features were Nurbol and Almas Meirmanov in head-to-head balancing and perch pole, Iris Gomez in her hair hang routine, and foot juggler Hans Klose, Jr. John Fugate was ringmaster. This one died from that most common of circus maladies: no front end.

Circuses and circus acts were much in evidence at amusement and theme parks, resort areas and flea markets. Baraboo, Wisconsin's great Circus World Museum had its usual excellent performance with Istvan Deltai on rola bola, clowns Greg and Karen DeSanto, Sylvia Zerbini with liberty horses and on the trapeze, the Jorge Barreda family with elephants, Lidiko Szephely and Istvan Deltai on the springboard, and Andrei and Valerie Ivanko in a juggling routine. David SaLoutos was singing ringmaster and Larry Stout directed a three piece band. Milwaukee's Great Circus Parade was moved to August to accommodate the National Governors' Conference. It was nevertheless its usual roaring success.

Peru, Indiana's International Circus Hall of Fame presented a circus during the summer. Under a former Big Apple Circus big top appeared Lili Esqueda Cristiani on the Spanish web, clowns Pat Kelly and Bob Hurley, juggler Armando Cristiani, Dave Knoderer with his dressage horse and comedy mule, and James Plunkett with his elephants. John Fugate was ringmaster. Other attraction were Dave Morecraft's calliope concerts, and Vincent Von Duke's Big Cat En-

Kay Rosaire's Big Cat Encounter was an attraction at an amusement park in Clementon, New Jersey during the summer. Her seventeen year old son Clayton is shown here working the tigers. Paul Gutheil photo.



counter. King Tusk, the great Ringling-Barnum elephant, laid over at the Hall of Fame for about a month.

George and Vicky Hanneford produced the circus at Fort Lauderdale's Thunderbird Swap Shop throughout the year. In April, the acts in the one ring performance included clown Raul Castano, trick cyclist Jimmy Castano, trapezeist Mark David, and Cathy Hanneford with the liberty horses and elephants. By October, new talent included Rebecca Perez on the trapeze, a gaucho act, and George Hanneford III with the elephants.

Circus acts were popular attractions at amusement parks, particularly in the East. Kay Rosaire and her cats summered at New Jersey park where son Clayton sometimes worked the act. Phil and Francine Schacht with their elephant Dondi, and Chris Kilpatrick with his lions and tigers spent the warm months at a park in Georgia. Johnny Welde had his bears, and Tom Thompson and Dionne Arata had Baby Nickolaus the elephant at the Catskill Game Farm in New York. The Hansen family with their rolling skating and other acts put on most of the tented performance at Western Playland in the Catskill Mountains. At Kennywood Park near Pittsburgh on May 29, the David Smiths, Sr. and Jr., both broke the record for the longest distance shot out of a cannon. Dave, Sr. set the new mark with a shot of 185'-10," while Dave, Jr. went 181'-1."

The spot date, a circus usually created for only one locale for a short time, sometimes only one performance, was an under-documented segment of the industry. Doubtless, some of these circuses were produced by well-known managers using different titles or without explicit connection. While these ventures were not a significant part of the sawdust landscape, a few were major undertakings. All of them, big and small, exemplified the amazingly fluid nature of the business as these companies were literally here today and gone tomorrow.

Zingaro, the French equestrian company, was under a big

top in New York City's Battery Park for an extended engagement starting in September. A man known only as Bartabas created the production, called Eclipse, which used twenty-six horses and a dozen riders. Although shrouded in intellectual mumbo-jumbo, the performance was an exhibition of dressage, liberty and pad-ridden horses once the hype was stripped away. The show's theme was light and darkness with a Korean motif used as backdrop. It seemed the intelligentsia had figured out that much of what passed as profound was simply banal since its last visit to Manhattan two years ago. The New York Times' reviewer called elements of the performance "ill-informed and arrogant," and the troupe didn't create the buzz among the literati and gentry that it did in 1996. The Times critic was dead on when she called it "arty hokum," although in fairness, she also wrote that it contained "moments of brilliantly imaginative, improbable magic." If nothing else, it was a throwback to the early days of the circus when virtually every act included horses. All that was missing was the Courier of St. Petersburg or Billy Buttons.

Mexico's Circo Atayde took its first shot at the huge Los Angeles Hispanic community for ten days in October. Promoted by Ringling-Barnum alumnus Earl Duryea, the show was a success with a gross of over \$500,000, advertising solely in Latino media. The power-packed performance included the Flying Rodogels, the Espanas in the globe of death, John Pelton with the Circus Gatti elephants, Ian Garden's liberty horses, the Boitchanovi teeterboard act, clowns Raul Castano and Coco Kramer, Tanya Herrman with a dog and pony act, Douglas and Oliver Ramos in a strap act, Brian Franzen with his cats, and Vivian Larible Espana on trapeze. Paula Klagge Santa-Maria was ringmistress.

Frank Curry's Ronald McDonald Circus was a big hit in Nashville early in the year, playing to 61,000 people in four days. Among the kinkers were Roy and Cindy Wells with the Kelly-Miller elephants.



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Circus Tamingo was a spot date produced by the Rosaire family for a camp for special needs children near Atlanta in May. Joe Bradbury collection.

Marc Verreault produced Super Cirque in Montreal at year's end. The program listed the Flying Espanas, Derrick Rosaire with his bears, Nellie Hanneford Poema with liberty horses, and human cannonball David Smith, Jr. Bill Birchfield had the sixteenth annual Kissimmee-St. Cloud Jaycees Circus in Florida on February 7. Arenic stars on this opera included the Cat Dancers, the Flying Wallendas, Phil and Francine Schacht with Dondi the elephant, Sacha Pavlata and Auriella Wallenda in a double cloud swing, and Lisa Dufresne with her miniature horses.

The majority of spot dates were more modest affairs. Ruben Cabal-

Zingaro was back in New York City in the late summer and fall with a show called Eclipse. Author's collection.



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lero, Sr., the patriarch of the flying trapeze family, produced an under-canvas show in North Las Vegas over two week ends in October to huge business.

La Cirque Bohemia appeared in a Fairfield, Connecticut theater for two days in June with Philippe Veisen on trapeze, Brett Marshall on his BMX bicycle, Skin and Bones with their trained pigs and dogs and in their juggling routine, and magicians Clifford and Roy. Ringmaster Dikki Ells also did comedy magic. Bob Fuller was the producer.

The Rosaire family produced Circus Tamingo in Atlanta in May as a fund raiser for a horse camp for special needs children. The acts included Pam Rosaire and husband Roger Zoppe with their chimps. The Fun Time Circus apparently had a few Florida dates in March with Ruby Ramos in her hair hang, the Arturo Ramos family on the perch pole, and hand balancer Engelbert Ramos. Owner Jim Hand clowning.

Even more obscure were shows that gave off, like quarks, only a faint glimmer of their existence. Among them was the Gypsy Circus which advertised in the trade press early in the year, yet gave no evidence of getting beyond the letterhead stage. Another was El Circo del Profesor Jirafales which had two California dates in April. This show may have been owned by Todd Frelinger who had out Circus Dolarea in 1997. Something called Circus Tales out of Milford, Connecticut was produced by Michael Sayers. Le Cirque Extraordinaire called itself Cirque du Soleil on ice. A forty-three member European troupe, it hoped to do over thirty American cities on its 1998-1999 route. The Royal Palladin Circus was scheduled to open in Virginia in February. Whether Extraordinaire or Palladin ever hurried is unknown. The College of Complexes, which was apparently a circus, had at least three stands in Florida in March and no press coverage.

The amateur youth circus flourished, teaching entry level skills to children and adolescents. Montreal's Ecole Nationale du Cirque, the span-

gled world's Harvard, had a remarkably comprehensive curriculum, and continued to crank out fodder for Soleil and other new wave shows. The school was the only one on the continent offering training that approached the level of the great European schools. Because of the lack of other institutions of higher learning, youth circuses took on increased importance. A remarkable number of professionals first saw-dust memories were on a kid show or at a circus camp.

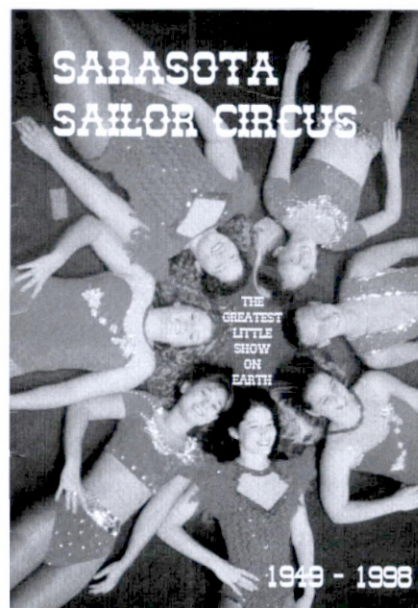
Sarasota, Florida's Sailor Circus, headed by Julie Snyder, put on a number of exhibitions under its permanent tent adjacent to the sponsoring Sarasota High School. The forty-ninth annual edition featured unicycle, trapeze, cloud swing, juggling, and many other skills, and had a thirty piece band. The Wenatchee Youth Circus, named after the troupe's home town in Washington, was another longtime punk show. Produced by Paul Pugh, it open-aired it during summer weekends in Washington and Oregon. The single-ring performance featured children between the ages of five and nineteen presenting typical show arts. A third long-running juvenile show was Peru, Indiana's Circus City Festival Circus which had its 39th season in July with in-ring talent between the ages of seven and twenty-one. An unprecedented eight person pyramid was presented as part of the show, possibly the most ever before an audience. Tim Holst, Ringling-Barnum talent scout, was the grand marshal of the annual Festival parade. Three air and one steam calliope were also in the parade, a record.

Florida State University's Flying High Circus, in its 51st year, played in Florida and Georgia. The Gamma Phi Circus at Illinois State University in Normal romped in April with about 75 students. Directed by Jerry Polacek, it was the nation's oldest college circus, dating to 1932. The Belfast, Ireland Community Circus was in the Washington, D. C. area in July with 15 boys and girls who unicycled, tumbled, juggled, and performed other routines. The Fern Street Circus was

an after-school circus arts program in San Diego. Producer John Highkin themed the performance around the story of two owners of a neighborhood cafe trying to save their business. Thank the Lord, the production had no dream sequences. Slack Wire artist Jamie Adkins was among the coaches and guest artists.

Circus Smirkus, a circus arts camp in Greensboro, Vermont, taught sawdust routines to children from ten to eighteen during the summer. After training, the infant kinkers went on the road, giving exhibitions in New England towns in a new 80 foot round top tent which sat 800. Among the instructors was the great Alberto Zoppe, a former center-ring rider on Ringling-Barnum. The performance had a rock and roll theme with Rob Mermin, the camp's founder, doing the announcing as a cool talking disc jockey. A production number was done to the strains of Jail House Rock, and the show had an Elvis impersonator. In all, it was a highly theatrical and sophisticated performance, particularly for a youth show. In December, the company took out Rockin' Robin's Oldtime Rock n' Roll Circus, a school show version of the summer production with Mermin doing the clowning and announcing.

Circus Smirkus performance at Killington, Vermont in July. Robert Sugarman photo.



Sarasota, Florida's Sailor Circus was the oldest of the high school shows. Shown here is the program cover. Dan Prugh collection.

Dolly Jacobs and Pedro Reis started the National Circus School in Sarasota. Using the tent from the Russian circus that closed in Orlando in 1997, it gave performances from late November through the new year to raise money for the school. Among the many professionals who volunteered their talents in support were comedian Denis Lacombe, the Flying Wallendas, the Moroccan Connection, David Rosarie with his dogs, and Dolly Jacobs on the Roman rings.

The Berkshire Kids Circus, another camp, enjoyed its fifth year in Pittsfield, Massachusetts in August. At session's end, the 55 scholars, aged eight to thirteen, had learned basic routines such as web and clowning. Michael Killian was camp director. The San Francisco School of Circus Arts had a number of former Pickle Family Circus alums on the staff including Lu Yi, once artistic director of China's Nanjing Acrobatic Troupe. After training, the kids put on an exhibition called the San Francisco Circus. Tim and GiGi Tegge produced the Great Youth Circus at an Appleton, Wisconsin middle school in September and October. Among the teachers were two Russian professionals, and Bob Good, Jr., the son of the legendary

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Tim Tegge produced the student circus at a middle school in Appleton, Wisconsin in October. Timothy N. Tegge collection.

circus fan, who taught juggling and hand balancing. GiGi Tegge taught magic, clowning and rope spinning. Five public performances were given after the completion of training. Bruce Pfeffer's Circus of the Kids taught circus skills to students in conjunction with physical education departments in Louisville and Largo, Florida in March and April.

Many performers donated their skills to charity. The Showfolks of Sarasota Circus, which benefited the local show folks club, was held on December 12 with all-volunteer actors. Produced by Tommy and Struppi Hanneford, the show featured Leo and Getti Garcia and the Bautista family in wheels of death, Violetta Ignatova with her dogs, and the Mark Karoly riders. The Gibsonton Super Circus rumbled in January for local charities for the first time since 1995. Under the Walker Bros. Circus tent appeared clown Dale Longmire, Lee and Judy Stevens with their baboons, Nicole Coronas on the trapeze, the Mark Karoly riders, and Dave Knoderer with his comedy mule.

Non-circus venues provided paychecks for many tanbark artists as sport shows, ice shows, trade shows, dinner theaters, renaissance faires, and cruise ships hired circus entertainment. Tom Demry with his elephant Anna Louise worked ren-

naissance faires during the summer, and Pat Davison rola bolaed on a cruise ship at year's end. The Tommy Bartlett water ski show in Wisconsin Dells featured famed juggler Dieter Tasso.

Casinos were major employers of show folks, so much so that Las Vegas was a major circus center. Circus Circus Casino on the strip hired more spangled talent than most tents including juggler and wire walker Gregory Popovich, juggler Dick Franco, the Flying Vazquez and the Flying Caceres. The Reno

branch of Circus Circus had the Flying Pages, the Flying Tabares, and foot juggler Wang Hong, among others. The Flying Cranes, the best flying return act ever, camped at the Reno Hilton as part of a show called Aireus which also featured the hand balancing Fausto Scorpions and trampoliner Tom Bolean.

The Atlantic City Tropicana Casino presented a thrill circus called Danger II, produced by Joe Bauer. The program featured the Rizhkov trio on trapeze, Roberto and Irene Espana on the inclined motorcycle, juggler T. J. Howell, the Urias family in the globe of death, Pedro Carrillo, Sr. and Luis Passo on the high wire, and human cannonball Brian Miser. Announcer Joe Bauer Jr. also walked the wheel of death. The indoor production was so popular that an outdoor edition was added in early summer. Some of the indoor talent moved outside, and Jay Cochrane came on to do his sway pole routine.

The Great American Wild West Show appeared at fairs. There were most likely other wild westers out, but they didn't spill any ink in the trade press. In other western news, a exhibition of memorabilia from the 101 Ranch was displayed at the nearby Ponca City, Oklahoma Cultural Center and Indian Museum. A pistol used by Buffalo Bill went for an astonishing \$123,500 at a San Francisco auction in May.

The Clown Hall of Fame in Milwaukee inducted Ernie "Blinko"

Burch; Peggy Williams, the first female clown on Ringling-Barnum in the Feld era; and Robert Armin, Queen Elizabeth I's jester. Sarasota's Ring of Fame honored aerialist Dolly Jacobs, jugglers Francis and Lottie Brunn, acrobats Walter and Johnny Yong, and show owner and hell-fire agent Floyd King. Peru's International Circus Hall of Fame immortalized show managers Thomas Taplin Cooke and Charles W. Boas, and crack shot Annie Oakley whose entire circus career was only a short stint on Sells Bros. in the mid 1880s. The Ringling Museum honored Gunther Gebel Williams as the Sarasota Circus Celebrity of the year. Also exalted were Ringling-Barnum legends Willis Lawson and Charles Smith.

North American performers did well at the Monte Carlo Circus Festival, the Oscars of the industry, early in the year. Acrobatic clown Bello Nock won four awards, and dog trainer Johnny Peers was on the bill. Former Gold Clown winner Elvin Bale was a judge. Ex-Carson and Barnes diva Pat White won first prize at a French festival in January with a mixed exotic animal act from

Poster for Cirque Leonardo in French Canada in May. Bobby Gibbs collection.

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Adultes	14.00\$	12.00\$
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(Le Pécarière)	Supermarché de la ville	30 Pécarière
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the Clubb-Chipperfield stable. The Sarasota Circus Festival was canceled, giving up the ghost after a thirteen year struggle.

A few shows erased the line between circus and theater. Often emphasizing the grotesque and bizarre, these troupes molded side show, circus, burlesque, vaudeville, and variety entertainment into a format which appealed to the MTV generation. Call it grunge circus, it might just become the next step in the spangled world's evolution as new wave circuses became more and more mainstream.

The leading light of this genre was the Bindlestiff Family Circus and Autonomadic Bookmobile Roadshow. After an early-year booking in a Brooklyn brew pub, the troupe took to the road for spring and fall engagements in small theaters and clubs across the country. The types of acts and the performers' names gave a sense of the show. Among them were clown Ramona Bindlestiff, slack wire artist and broken glass walker David Didd who performed a strip tease on the rope, Mr. Pennygaff who swallowed swords and was the human blockhead, escape artist and contortionist Daniel Smith, and the juggling Donniker brothers. Philomena Bindlestiff was the ring-mistress and performed bull whipping and trapeze, not a typical combination of skills. The show's wink and a grin attitude greatly appealed to younger audiences. Among its many charming aspects was its hilarious newsletter, called *Roustabout Reporter*.

Circus Millennia was at an Arlington, Virginia theater for most of July with Philomena Bindlestiff as guest artist. She ate fire and stilt walked. Circus Redickuleless, a San Francisco-based troupe, was even further out. Headed by a man known as Chicken, the company parodied the circus with such acts as a vegan geek who only bit the heads off lettuce, and a temporarily tattooed man. Circus Diva was at New York City's legendary Roseland. Its claim to fame was that some of its twenty-six kinkers performed nude.

Some exhibitions escaped classifi-



Dick Monday, David Shiner, and Bello Nock, three great clowns, pose after a performance of the New York Goofs, Monday's and Michael Bongar's comedy troupe, in December. Paul Gutheil photo.

cation. The entire performance of Villa Villa, an Argentine import which appeared in a New York City theater in June, took place in the air. The audience stood as bungee jumping, flying return, and other aerial routines took place. Circus Amok played around New York City in the summer. It was headed by Jennifer Miller, a true breaded lady, who juggled and was an escape artist. She also appeared in the side show at Coney Island. The Jim Rose Circus Side Show, the troupe that started the shock circus craze, spent much of the year touring South Africa and Australia. Former Rose star Tim "Torture King" Cridland did his sword swallowing and human pin cushion routines at California's Knots Berry Farm. His booking at a family attraction was a sign of the growing acceptance of this brand of the business.

Felix Adler Days were held in Clinton, Iowa in June. Clownfest '98 was in Seaside, New Jersey in September. The Ringling Museum celebrated the 100th anniversary of the birth of the great clown Emmett Kelly. The Goof Family, a clown show produced by Dick Monday and Michael Bongar, appeared in New York City in December. Among the cast members was Barry "Grandma" Lubin. Bill Irwin and David Shiner performed their great piece Fool Moon in San Francisco in the fall, and in New York City at year's end.

Michael Moschen toured his remarkable one man juggling show and was the subject of a *New Yorker* profile. Flyin' Bob Palmer, a Canadian aerialist, walked a tightrope between the New York City's World Trade Center's two towers. Flyin' Bob was never more than twelve feet off the ground and he walked only twenty-two feet. It was April Fool's Day.

Bridgeport Connecticut's Barnum Museum had an exhibit on the circus. Bob Pelton, the museum's long-time curator, retired after over twenty years on the job. A museum in Quebec also featured circus displays. An arts center in Cincinnati had an exhibition of side show banner painting. Junkyard Johnny Meah, himself a master of the art, was the emcee at the opening gala. The play about the Hilton sister, Siamese twins, which tanked on Broadway in 1997, reopened in Los Angeles late in the year. The Flying Trapeze Association was formed, and trapeze legend Tito Gaona opened a flying trapeze school at the former Ringling-Barnum winter quarters in Venice, Florida.

Canada issued a set of four stamps with circus themes. Former show owner Bill Griffith opened the American Calliope Center in Wisconsin with the largest number of the instruments ever under one roof. John Herriott, the show world's Tennyson, recorded a tape of his poetry. The Brockville, Ontario railroad station unveiled a mural depicting the arrival of the Barnum show's advance car in the 1880s. The remains of a monkey were found during the demolition of Boston Gardens. It was speculated that the monk met his maker while appearing with Ringling-Barnum years before.

There were a number of auctions of circus memorabilia throughout the year. Among the treasures on the block was an 1891 Barnum and Bailey lithograph that went for \$10,350. A ukulele autographed by Tiny Tim while he was on the Great American Circus in 1985 brought \$650 at auction. But it's a Fixer Upper Department: The West Baden Springs Hotel, owned by Ed Ballard

of American Circus Corporation fame, was for sale for a mere \$29.5 million, and was reported reopened at year's end. Fifteen rare issues of the *Herald of Freedom*, the newspaper published by P. T. Barnum in the 1830s, were donated to the Barnum Museum.

Surf's Up Department: The number of circus-related internet sites continued to grow. The winner of the Shannon Woodcock Award for best web site went to Ringling-Barnum's on-line offering. A video on Wisconsin's circus heritage premiered in Baraboo in October. The History Channel's *Trains Unlimited* broadcast an episode on circus trains in which CHS president Richard Reynolds III was an expert commentator. A Ft. Wayne, Indiana high school produced a full length film about the John Robinson Circus in the nineteenth century. Sarasota was reunion central in December as alumni of about eleven shows got together.

The year was the best ever for historical writing on field shows. Wisconsin's circus tradition, Benson's wild animal farm, the origins of the Barnum show, turn of the century variety acts, the Bertram Mills circus, Buffalo Bill's Wild West, Russian clowning, rhinos, and the Hanlon family of pioneer trapezeists were all subjects of monographs. Other volumes included memoirs by or about the Nock family, Irvin Feld, Frank Cain, Bobby Steele, and the Jim Rose sideshow. After much debate, much of it rancorous, the prestigious Antony Hippisley Coxe Award for the year's best circus book was declared a three way tie. Sharing the much coveted prize were William Slout for his biographical dictionary of nineteenth century circus personnel, John McConnell for his history of Detroit's Shrine circus, and Charles Wilkins for his account of the 1997 Great Wallenda Circus' tour of Canada. Two or three other 1998 books would have won the award in other years, so rich was the quality of the scholarship. The world was route bookless for the second season in a row, the book year's only negative note.

Many beloved members of the cir-

cus fraternity departed this vale of tears in 1998. Among them: Adolf Althoff, German circus legend; Tommy Bartlett, Wisconsin Dells attraction owner; Roy Bell, Ward-Bell flyer; James "Tex" Copeland, Ringling-Barnum veteran; J. Allen Duffield, extreme circus fan and



Chuck Lizza's death was one of the year's most tragic events. He is shown here in 1997 with Jupiter, the tiger who killed him in October, and Joy Holiday the next month. Paul Gutheil photo.

show agent; Walter Edmonds, author of the circus novel *Chad Hanna*; Rose Fernandez, widow of E. K. Fernandez; Doris Guay aka Joy Holiday, Cat Dancer; Joe Hodges, equestrian on pre-combine Ringling show; Ed Jones, long-time friend of the profession; Ron Kelroy, performer and producer; Benny Kronberger, character; Charles E. Lizza III, Cat Dancer; Francis Maley, widow of Arnold Maley; Ione McIntosh, show person; James C. McIntyre, former Big Apple manager; Marian McKennon, benefactor; Stu Miller, showman; Montie Montana, western showman; Jewell New, cat trainer; Pio Nock, great clown; Jim Nordmark, producer and telemarketer supreme; Angela Dubsky Pavlata, Risley artist; Cleo Plunkett, showman; Howard Schultz, talent agent; Tony Scott, widow of elephant

man Arky Scott; Bill Siegrist, aerialist from legendary family; Art Stensvad, co-founder of Windjammers Unlimited; Robert Lewis Taylor, author of *Center Ring*; Naomi Ruth "Torchy" Townsend, performer; Arturo "The Great Arturo" Trostel, high wire artist; Jean Warner, retired performer; David "Buddy" Watkins, chimp and horse trainer; and Isla Miller, mother superior of Carson and Barnes.

This account would have been far less comprehensive were it not for the mountain of data I received from show folks and show fans. This survey's merits are in large measure the result of their thoughtfulness; its deficiencies, which are doubtless myriad, are mine. This year's champions: Ron Bacon, Bill Biggerstaff, Joseph T. Bradbury, Paul Butler, David Carlyon, Jerry Cash, Herb Clement, Don Covington, Cam Cridlebaugh, Fred Dahlinger, Chuck Druding, Bill Elbirn, Henry Fraser, John Fugate, Bobby Gibbs, Burt Harwood, Sally Harwood, LaVahn Hoh, Paul Holley, Albert House, Sheelagh Jones, Frank Mara, Don Marcks, John McConnell, Edward Meals, Joseph Meyers, Greg Parkinson, Fred D. Pfening, Jr., Daniel Prugh, J. Scott Pyles, Jeanne Reynolds, Richard J. Reynolds III, Bill Rhodes, Johnnie Rice, Ron Sanford, Karen Severson, Charles Simpson, Michael Sporrer, Robert Sugarman, Timothy N. Tegge, Cherie Valentine, Nicole Valentine, William Wiemhoff, and William H. Woodcock. Special thanks to Paul Gutheil whose fine photographs have for years provided a visual record of the business, often of its off-beat sectors.

Edited by Don Marcks for over twenty-five years, *Circus Report*, the late twentieth century's answer to the New York *Clipper*, was an indispensable source of information, so much so that writing this opus would be impossible without it. *Amusement Business*, *Back Yard*, *White Tops*, and *Showfolks of Sarasota Newsletter* were also useful as were scores of newspaper cuttings. Of particular note was *Spectacle* which contained the most sophisticated analysis of circus this side of Stuart Thayer.

HOLLAND CLASSICAL CIRCUS

Seasons of 1942-1943
By Fred D. Pfening, Jr.

Four pole, one ring European style circus big tops are commonplace in America today, from large ones used by Barnum's Kaleidoscope, Big Apple, Zerbini and Hanneford to smaller ones on Kelly-Miller and Chimera. Are they new to America? No. The first European style tent was used in the United States by Dan Rice in the 1860s. The second was in 1942. This 1942 circus was also the first to use hired tractors to pull show-owned semis. The show was the Holland Classical Circus.

Bernard Van Leer found financial success as a leading steel industrialist in the Netherlands in the 1930s. With a great love for horses, he began gathering them from around the globe. He trained and presented them on special occasions. In 1941 Van Leer's stallions were in Holland at the time of the Nazi invasion. Developing a plan to save his prized stock he managed to move them on eleven special railroad cars to Paris for a booking at Circus Medrano. From there, he, with two trainers and his horses, made plans to head for the Spanish border. However, he was unable to secure Spanish visas for the trainers. With only his secretary he was able to move the horses to Bilbao, Spain. Van Leer and his troupe boarded the Spanish ship *Mangallanes* for the United States. With the help of friends, the animals were quickly moved to the stables of the Sleepy Hollow Country Club in Westchester, New York.

There he began work-



Bernard Van Leer, Dutch circus owner. All illustrations are from the Pfening Archives.

ing with the horses and found that they had not forgotten their training. The thoroughbreds included seven Lippizaners, six Friesians and four Arabians.

Although he had no experience as

High school horses with Capt. Heyer in 1942.

a circus owner he made plans to organize a European-style circus that would allow his prized horses to be shown in the United States.

It is not known how he secured the new white four pole big top. None had been made in America, and certainly with war time shortages one could not have been manufactured in 1942. In addition he secured European style seats that included plush boxes with chairs at ring side.

The Van Leer performance was unlike the tradition shows American circus fans knew. It included an orchestra, eleven ballet dancers, and stage lighting.

Framing a circus required an experienced showman to acquire the trucks, electrical system and additional tents. That knowledgeable person was probably Phil Wirth. It is apparent that Van Leer erred in not hiring experienced advance people. The show used no billing, only newspaper and radio advertising. This type of operation needed a person who could secure sponsorships, much like the Big Apple does today. On the other hand without a firm route booked the show could extend its stay in a city.

The June 16, 1942 *Billboard* provided the first details on the new circus: "Wealthy Holland refugee Bernard Van Leer, steel biggie, opened a European-styled circus at Pelton Field, Yonkers, on Wednesday and it's a terrific college try, but before this corking show can click in the U. S. A. there will have to be changes in opera-



tion. Van Leer calls his presentation the Holland Classical Circus, which is no misnomer, being equipped with the best of everything and including in its performance a 12-people ballet accompanied by a little symphony orchestra of 14 pieces, heavy, of course, on strings, and containing a piano, which in itself is new in sawdust annals.

"There hasn't been a fancy enterprise like this one around since 1931, when Frank and Phil Wirth, Jimmy Sullivan and the late Larry Boyd brought out St. Leon Bros.' Circus in Bridgeport, which was good while it lasted, but it didn't stay very long. St. Leon coloring was dominated by red, this one by blue and white. Capacity is about 2,500 under a 120-foot round top with no rib ropes, which may not work out so well in high winds. Interior is clear, there being four poles spotted in the corners, with eight poles in between and a ring of some 40 feet.

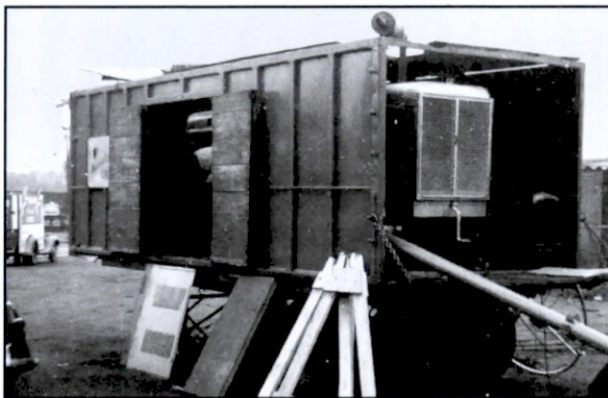
"Side walls have expensive blue plush and the bleacher seats, of solid-looking, timber and quite heavy to lug around, are made comfortable with long blue leather pads. The pitch is about as perfect as it could be for visibility. Around the curb are box stalls with folding chairs, and directly behind the boxes are other chairs for a lower tab, but still too high. Scale tried was \$3, \$2 and \$1, plus tax, but the impresario, noting a con-

Holland Classical program for the New Britain stand in 1942.

spicuous lack of paying customers, changed the advertised range to \$2, \$1.50, \$1 and 75 cents, with half tabs for kids. Boxes still three bucks for them's that want 'em. Aside from original prices, which are easily corrected, big trouble is no auspices, and this type of show cries out for a class sponsor with or without a timely charity or war relief hook-up.

"Performance is first-rate in every particular, including lighting, discounting some rough spots which are inevitable at an opening night. There was a show given in the afternoon to a practically empty house, and the next performance, which was the one officially caught, marked a sharp improvement. Lots of time is consumed setting up a 20-foot stage, seats being about four-fifths around the arena and platform with elegant blue velvet curtain and white tassels taking up balance. This arrangement necessitated bringing the horses and elephants in from the front around outside of tent via the back yard. Alteration calls for cutting out a section of bleachers and thus improvising an entrance-exit for the animals, which should make for smoother going and remove confusion of ring entry from customer vision.

"No lightweight act in this class operation, in fact, some of the turns were vociferously received. Van Leer engaged the cream stuff available right now from the Frank Wirth office, these acts being Loyal's Dogs; trapeze artist, Paul Merkle; trampolinists Adrianna and Charly; bird impersonating Novello Brothers (doubling with eccentric comedy instrumentation and acrobats); wire artist Miacahua (for Con Colleano, who received a last-minute booking in California theaters); Powers' elephants; web worker and one-arm plunger Janet May; tramp bicyclists Will Morris and Bobby; and the teeterboard Faludys. All solid act



Holland Classical light plant semi.

stuff here and a swell two-hour show.

"Supplementing the standard turns are horse acts and the ballet, nine girls and three males, some from the famous Jooss international terperery. Their opening number, which starts the show, is called Rhapsody in White, an unusual spec centered about former Ringling horse star William Heyer with three white high school steeds. Most of the ballet is on the stage, but at finish the white-skirted muscle-and-toe gals take to the ring curb to see Heyer off with flowers. Nice lighting here from about 20 spots hung on four poles and seven from the roof.

"Heyer appears in a couple of numbers later with two liberty horses bearing smart red trappings and patriotic pompoms, followed by a talking horse, and the ballet comes on half-way down the program doing a swift Latin dance in smart red skirts and yellow tops. Heyer follows this with Van Leer's liberty horse octet, two of them giving a socko finish with rapid pivoting around the ring. Entire company parades at finale, the ballet in picturesque Dutch get-up designed by Frenchman Max Weldy, who two years ago fashioned Ringling's Marco Polo pageant.

"In short, lots of show and lots of production, but the front end or advance is muddled, and that takes in publicity, advertising and billing, which are below par. After putting in a reputed \$80,000 as first investment, Van Leer deserves better and will probably work it out. He's paying good salaries and is an intelligent man with a circus flair. Schedule calls for shows from Wednesday through Sunday, with matinees daily.



The lot in New Britain. Right to left the marquee, horse tent, big top and dressing top.

Spots booked after Yonkers are New Britain, Bridgeport and Waterbury, Connecticut. Heyer is manager and ringmaster, assisted by Phil Wirth, and in the ticket wagon is George Poli. Lew Dufour is booking some dates, having landed Yonkers when they said it couldn't be done, but it isn't his fault that the box office didn't jell at the maiden date. Bob Reynolds, ex-Ringlingite, is boss of props.

"Van Leer uses outside hauling, but has about eight trucks of his own.

"Lighting is furnished by two 50-k.w. transformers set on what is apparently a new truck, Frank (La La) Prevost and Hip Raymond, both veterans, are the clowns, doing both talk and panto, mostly the former. First night visitors were John Murray Anderson, who did this year's Ringling show, accompanied by Broadway and World's Fair designer-producer Albert Johnson and circus author Dixie Wilson; also tentmen Arthur Campfeld and John and Sam Martin. Here's something: There's no side show and no ground concessions. Van Leer wants no part of them. A spot is set up between marquee and entrance to arena where drinks and novelties may be bought. Van Leer didn't want butchering in the seats, either, but finally let down the bars. Ushers are town boys, most of them doubling as grips. Turnover is almost continuous with workers."

After the Yonkers stand the show moved to Bridgeport, Connecticut. The June 27 *Billboard* reported: "Holland Classical Circus, which opened a five-day engagement in Bridgeport, Connecticut on June 10, with two performances daily, met

with such success that a children's matinee was added on Saturday (13), and then held over for an extra seven day booking the following week. Show came in without auspices, no billing around town, confining advertising only to newspapers and local radio stations. Although at first admission price was advertised at 75 cents, reduction was made to 55 cents before opening, with opening night capacity.



Sound truck used as a downtown bally in 1942.

"Reviews by all newspapers were full of praise, calling the show one of the best ever to hit town. Weather conditions were bad, with several rainy days. At night show on June 14, with rain storm and terrific wind, the performance was terminated when half over and patrons were given return tickets."

The July 11 *Billboard* told of the record date: "Holland Classical Circus completed its fourth and last

week on the Bridgeport circus grounds at Black Rock, breaking records for any circus in length of stay in the city's history. A novelty for closing week was the addition of the Circus Museum, which featured Van Leer's collection of European harness, saddles, plumes and noted circus paintings by French artists. A special performance was given at Hillside Home, a city institution, through co-operation of city officials and circus executives."

This report on the Van Leer circus appeared in the 1942 spring issue of *White Tops*: "A large and representative group of New Britain, Connecticut, headed by Mayor George A. Quigley of that city, attended the opening of the engagement there of the Holland Classical Circus on Thursday evening, July 9th. Perfect circus weather prevailed. Mr. Bernard Van Leer, owner, who came to America from Holland about 12 months ago, is presenting something entirely new in circus entertainment and also looks after the comfort of his patrons in every way. The opening night audience were high in their praise of the excellent two hour performance and of the many innovations introduced for their comfort. This is

a different circus, built on the European idea. There is no menagerie or side show.

"After passing through the entrance you first come to the 'Tack Room' with blue plush drapes around the sides and potted palms about the room. In this room is an orate exhibition of harness, trappings, saddles, plumes, etc., which Mr. Van Leer brought from Holland. Next is the 'Pad Room' where his fine stock is on

Ticket truck and marquee leading into the horse tent.



exhibit consisting 19 horses and 3 ponies also brought from Holland. The horses include 7 Lippizaners, Friesians, the only breed of its kind in America and 4 Arabians. Interesting pictures of the horses may be purchased at a booth there. Also in here is a concession booth for the sale of peanuts, soft drinks, etc. At end are the Power's Elephants. In this room potted palms are used. From here you pass into the big top, which seats 2,000, with one large ring, flanking the side is a stage with elaborate drapes. At side of the stage is a special stand for the fourteen piece orchestra. There are 30 spotlights placed at advantageous locations.

"The seating arrangement is unique, surrounding the ring, except where the stage flanks it. Boxes are placed right up to the ring's edge. In back of these are a few rows of chairs and then the raised bleacher seats, some of which have cushions, all with foot rests, and wide enough to be real comfortable. These are reached by ramps, with hand railings and a number of exits leading directly to the outside the top of the bleachers, quite an innovation in America circus annals. Several electric fans were used in the tent.

"The performance opened with an overture by the orchestra. The *Star Spangled Banner* was then played with many in the audience joining in singing.

"Number 2 on the program was *Rhapsody in White*, with 3 white horses performing in the ring, followed by ballet girls on the stage, who performed with grace and agility. As a final with the tent dimmed, they paraded the edge of the ring carrying illuminated bouquets of flowers. On the stage were several containers of flowers to complete this attractive picture. 'Paul' followed this number in an aerial act which was well received.

"Alf Loyal and his French Poodles, one of America's fastest moving dog acts, brought gates of laughter from the patrons. Then followed an act with liberty horses, the trainer being Captain Heyer. 'Fleurillo' on the wire was next

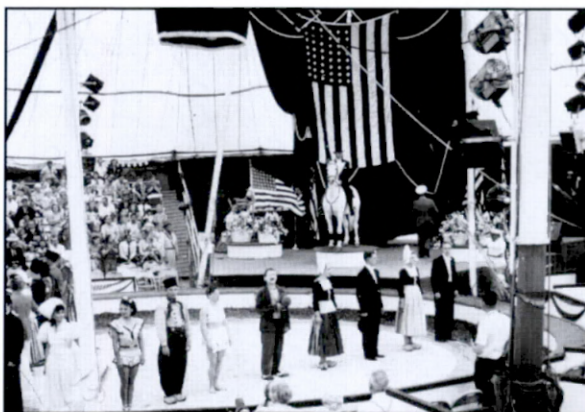


The Tally-Ho wagon in the back yard.

and her many intricate routines were accomplished without the aid of a balance pole or umbrella. Her act was greeted with heavy applause. And then the Dutch Ballet, 8 girls with Dutch costumes, which was very colorful. Number 8 were eight liberty horses, Captain Heyer, trainer. These beautiful Arabian stallions were all white, except one. They had red harness with red white and blue plumes attached to their backs and smaller ones on top of their heads. Following this there was a 15 minute intermission.

"Janet May, dainty aerialist, opened the second part of the program, presenting her nationally known act with her usual skill and grace, closing with 63 one arm half plange turns, and was given a tremendous hand by the audience. The next number was a clown ballet, the 8 girls this time being dressed in grotesque clown make-ups. This was followed by Juno, a high school horse, with Captain Heyer in the saddle, always a favorite with circus audiences. Number 12 was Adriana and Charles, trampoline act, which was the heaviest applause getter of the evening. Many difficult routines are

The finale of the 1942 performance with entire company.



accomplished by this pair. The male member works in a Charlie Chaplin make-up and really goes to town with his comedy. The ever popular Powers' elephants followed, their barber, baseball, battle and other routines moving at a fast pace under the able direction of the young lady trainer, and as usual the act clicked strongly with the patrons. Will Morris and Bobby, comedy bicycle act, was next. The patrons were in stitches watching this pair, who were dressed in comedy costumes, get tangled up on one bicycle, closing with a difficult and clever jump by one, Will Morris, from a teeterboard to a bicycle tipped up on one wheel, and then riding off on it in this position. This part of the act was made more difficult due to the limited area of the stage.

"The finale was a patriotic number participated in by the entire company. In the center of the ring Captain Heyer, carrying an American flag, was mounted on 'Juno,' with the liberty horses grouped about him. There was a special stage decoration with lighting effects. Two large American flags were unfurled over the ring. The entire company then paraded around the edge of the ring, while singing *God Bless America*. This brought a very satisfying performance to a close.

"The entire proceeds from the opening night and the matinee the following day were turned over to the local U. S. O. Citizen's Committee to be used for the entertainment of selectees before their entrainment for camp.

"An attractive souvenir program was issued, among the features was a story of the CFA. New Britain business men responded generously with ads.

"The orchestra was one of the outstanding innovations and the patrons said they liked it. Their cueing of the performance was perfect. This circus deserves capacity business at all performances."

It is not known if the circus closed in New Britain, or if it played Waterbury, the other announced stand. Nothing further appeared in the *Billboard* in 1942.

Van Leer was not sure

about opening the circus in 1943. He advertised in the January 2 *Billboard*, offering to rent a complete circus consisting of the big top, with stage, blue velvet draperies, boxes, chairs, cushion seats, costumes, and electrical equipment including two generators. The entire outfit was constructed so that it could be transported by rail in two freight cars. The ad also made available liberty and high school horses for dates. The string of horses included Lippizanners, Arabian and Friesians. Each act was equipped with a complete tack room. It appears that he had no takers and began thinking of making another try in 1943.

Van Leer, or his representative, contracted the circus in Bridgeport at the city-owned Pleasure Beach Park for the summer season.

The May 22 *Billboard* reported: "The top for the Holland Classical Circus was raised at Pleasure Beach Park in Bridgeport and will open on May 22.

"Center poles have been imbedded deeply in cement, and steel wires have been substituted for rope in guy lines. In addition the tent has been double staked."

Further news came in the *Billboard* a week later: "Bernard Van Leer, a leading steel industrialist in Holland until the Nazis moved in and who is an equestrian connoisseur, brought his Holland Classical Circus to Bridgeport for his second consecutive season, with the show opening night of May 22.

"With the tent blown down several days before opening during a severe rainstorm, the staff ran into unforeseen difficulties but managed to open for scheduled opening performance, starting only 15 minutes late, with performance getting under way at 8:45, with an overture by a 10-piece orchestra, which specializes more in the symphonic type of music than on the usual circus music. Then followed a short speech by Van Leer.

"Display No. 2. Rhapsody In Blue and White. Colonel Selihoff on a white steed dances his horse between four pedestals of white water lilies, after which a group of 10 girls, gowned in white, do a dreamy ballet number.

"No. 3. Jules and Clifton. Standard

comedy knockabout act that is always sure-fire.

"No. 4. Clowns on-stage.

"No. 5. John Siems, veteran magician, works in clown costume for the first time in his 45 years of magic work, assisted by clowns.

"No. 6. Liberty act. Van Leer works first with a brown horse, then two white, three white, and three white and one gray.

"No. 7. Skating Earls, two men and two women, in a fast session with the usual appeal to spectators for volunteers to have a free ride.

"No. 8. Edison and Louise. Team provides much comedy in the act, in which two small dogs give an excellent performance.

"No. 9. Ballet girls in riding costumes in a fine routine.

"No. 10. Colonel Selihoff, assisted by Michael Miller, puts six Holland Friesian horses, all jet black, into beautiful formations, ending with all horses with forefeet in air. Intermission of 15 minutes.

"No. 11. Les Ivanoffs, who prove the thrill act of the show, with two men and one woman performing on bars. One of men works comedy during first part of act, afterwards changing to straight. Girl besides working the bars, does difficult dance tumbles on stage.

"No. 12. Lamont's Cockatoos and Macaws. A real novelty.

"No. 13. High school act, Selihoff again displays his equestrienne versatility.

"No. 14. Kay and Karol, male and woman in a fine exhibition of juggling with clubs.

"No. 15. The finale. with apologies from Van Leer for curtailing of finale which was not entirely ready. He came out in red riding costume on a white horse with solo work; then ballet give Russian dance on stage; then into ring for star formation, gown red, white and blue.

"Show ran two hours and 35 minutes which included the intermission.

"Mary and Jim, comedy act, which was billed did not appear. Clowns are Rube Curtis, Austin A. Trull and Red Roberts. Tent holds about 2,000. Opening performance was near capacity. Prices range from 55 cents to \$2.20, with half price for children. Stage is situated at one end of tent, seating arrangement in form of a horse shoe. An apron is built from stage around ring, on which ballet girls dance in their number on outer skirt of ring are boxes, which are the higher priced seats. Programs, distributed free, are devoid of advertising.

"Tent is pitched at Pleasure Beach Park. Show is starting with one performance daily, and when things get going smoothly it is expected to hold two performances daily, and probably three on weekends, according to Perry W. Rodman, managing director of the park, with shows running

through the summer, if patronage warrents. Acts will be change through the run, with most of them booked in various periods with options. There is no side show. Don Felix is handling publicity."

Newspaper ad for the opening in 1943.

The June 12 *Billboard* noted: "Going into its second week at Bridgeport's Pleasure Beach Park, the Holland Classical Circus made several switches in program, all for the better; with performances now a solid

two hours. With nightly performances, three shows were played daily over Memorial Day week-end. Tommy Kay, of the juggling team of Kay and Karol, has been promoted to general manager. Besides these duties he is emceeing the acts, as well as doing his own act with Miss Karol. He formerly trouped with the Ringling show. Michael Miller, who has been assisting Col. Selihoff with his high-school horses, has a spot by himself now with a liberty horse act. The Skating Earls have closed, and

GALA OPENING
TONIGHT AT 8:30 P. M.
DAILY THEREAFTER

HOLLAND Classical CIRCUS

With
World Famous Horses

EDISON & LOUISE International Trickmaster	THE EARLS Roller Thrills
KAY & KAROL Juggling Novelties	LAMONTS TRAINED BIRDS
JOHN SIEMS World's Greatest Prestidigitator	JULES & CLIFTON Comedy Delux

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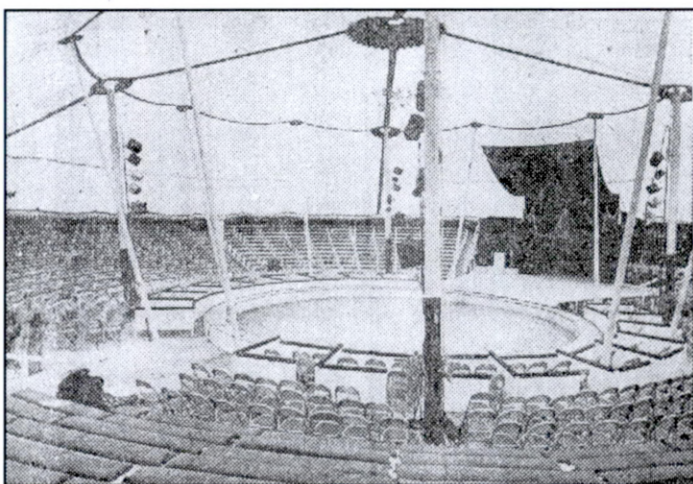
PLEASURE BEACH PARK
OPERATIONS:
CITY OF BRIDGEPORT, CONN.

Don Francisco, wire, has taken their place.

"Austin C. Trull (Ozzie), clown cop, now has a spot with a yodeling specialty which goes over solidly. Rube Curtis and Pete (Hap) Roberts, the other members of clown alley, put over many gags. Roberts and Allen Australian whip specialty; and works with his dog, Skippy. The ork, which was elevated on the right side of stage, is now on the left side of stage on the level, which is a good move, for in the former spot it was almost impossible to catch cues. New leader is Al Ferry. John Siems, magician, who did his act in clown costume at opening performances, is now in tuxedo. He works well with clown alley. Les Ivanoffs, who formerly opened second half of show, has been shifted to opener, while the Rhapsody in Blue and White, with horses and ballet, has been shifted to next-to-closing. Eudoxia Miranona, wardrobe mistress, was painfully injured when she fell over a stake pole in the darkness, injuring her leg.

"Mary Jane Shea is the prima ballerina, with Adelaide Varricchlo and Bretna, Deerborn as soloists, while the corps de ballet is composed of Olga Alexandrovna, Andrea Fodor, Alice Hendrickson, Rita Hotzer, Virginia Richardson, Ruth Somers, Alice Temkin and Helen Ward. Eddie Foran has charge of concessions, A. Wallace is electrician, Scotty McShane handles novelties, Betty Miller is in the ticket office, Jack Dalton is carpenter. Programs are now being sold. Finale is now more snappy, with performers singing national anthem led by Miss Louise of Edison and Louise, while grouped around horse and rider on stage, with American flag predominant.

"The show closed on May 22 due to a ban on gasoline being used for pleasure driving. The limited number of buses providing service to the park cut attendance considerably. On the final day the circus played to only thirty-nine persons. Van Leer, manager, planned to reopen in the park as soon as conditions improved, meanwhile he left his tent,



The tent and seats as pictured in a for sale ad.

equipment and stock intact, with a skeleton crew to care for them."

The Pleasure Beach Park reopened the show on July 3. Two performances were given at 7 and 9 and drew full houses. Clowns Eddie Allen and Hap Roberts were back after being with Gilbert Bros. The John Robinson elephants were added to the performance. Michael Miller replaced Col. Selihoff as equestrian director.

A new program was printed for the reopened show. The new line up was: "Those Mighty Pachyderms ROBINSONS ELEPHANTS 'Tons of Fun.'

"The Inimitable 3 FALUDYS 'Tetter Board Laughs.'

"Captain Miller presents Van Leer's Famous Liberty Horse—JIMMY 'A Speedy Fellow from Wales.'

"Recent Feature of the Greatest Show On Earth THE CANE-STREL-LIS 'Balancing Ladders.'

Captain Miller presents Van Leer's Renowned High School Horses

Billboard used in New Britain, Connecticut in 1943.



SALVY and TROYA 'Horse Sense.'

"The International Favorites BILLY WELLS and THE 4 FAYS 'Soup To Nuts.'

"The Sensation of the Big Top LA TOSCA CANESTRELLI 'Queen of the Bounding Rope.'

"Van Leer's Favorite 8 LIBERTY STALLIONS 'Arabian Thoroughbreds.'

"Equestrienne Director and Trainer for the Van Leer Horses CAPTAIN

MICHAEL MILLER.

"Clown Antics by Bridgeport's 'Big Top' Favorite JO-JO and Lou Wilton as YO-YO

"Music by GUS MEYERS and His Band."

Fred Cuneo managed the show, handled bookings and announced the acts. Gus Meyers Jr. was musical director. Perry Rodman, of the park, stated that show would play nightly with three shows on Sundays and holidays. The performance ran one hour and ten minutes. Program sheets were again distributed free. Admission scale was 55 to 85 cents, with box seats at \$1.10, and children 30 cents, with servicemen admitted free. Former engagement was at \$2.20 top. Eddie Foran handled concessions, and Scotty McShane novelties. Dick Kilatruck was electrician.

The reopened season closed the week of July 24. Bad transportation problems, plus the engagement of the Ringling show within several blocks of the showgrounds, contributed toward poor business.

Van Leer advertised the show for sale in the July 31 *Billboard*. Included were the 120 foot big top, complete with box seats; bleachers; a 120 by 40 foot animal tent; two dressing tents; a 40 by 40 foot marquee; a complete lighting system, consisting of two 50 k.w. gas-driven generators, cables, spotlights and switch board; and a complete sound system. The address given was Van Leer, Briarcliff Manor, New York.

It is not known who may have bought the equipment. Van Leer lost upwards of \$100,000 in his circus venture. But he kept his first love, the horses.

Side Lights On The Circus Business

PART SIX

By David W. Watt

February 15, 1913

In giving you descriptions of the men who became famous in the circus business years ago, there was one who in his line of work was known as top-notch, whom I had almost forgotten. While he never was an owner of a big show, he was famous for many years in his line of work with the Barnum, the Buffalo Bill and the Burr Robbins shows.

This man was Jason Robbins, and his home was in Brooklyn, New York. In the early seventies while he was still a young man, he had something of a reputation as a caterer. Young Robbins conceived the idea of starting what was known with the show as the cook tent, and up to that time all the big shows, except the Adam Forepaugh, had been boarding their people at the different hotels in the towns in which they showed.

Young Robbins visited Mr. Bailey and P. T. Barnum and talked the matter over, and they were not long in making a contract for him to furnish meals for all the working people with the show for so much per meal. He had three tents, the main one of which was known as the cook tent and the other two as dining rooms.

In those days they did not carry nearly as many people as in later years, but even at that time he served meals three times a day to

several hundred people. He stayed with the Barnum show for several years in this capacity and along about the first of the eighties, after amassing quite a fortune, he bought the privileges with the Burr Robbins show and also had the cook tent.

He stayed with the Burr Robbins show for two years, but it was not a money making venture and after losing considerable money he went to the Forepaugh show and a little later went to the Buffalo Bill show.

By this time the shows had grown to larger proportions. The last time I saw Mr. Robbins he was serving between 2,100 and 2,200 meals a day. His help consisted of what was known as two twenty-four hour men and their duties were to go ahead of the show four hours and get the wood, meat and vegetables on the lot early in the morning.

The cook tent, wagons and provisions were always the first to be unloaded in the morning and if the show got in town early, Jason Robbins always had his breakfast ready at 7 o'clock, and it was a good one. These twenty four hour men would alternate their towns and always stayed back till everything

Forming the Burr Robbins Circus parade in 1887. Circus World Museum collection.

was in readiness before they would leave for the next town.

For several years Robbins carried in all about sixty five men. His price for meals varied all the way from eighteen to twenty five cents and for many years ran two dining rooms, one that was used as an officers and managers tent and the other for the working people.

With the Buffalo Bill show he had three dining rooms, one extra for a hundred or more Indians, which were always with the Buffalo Bill show. Whether it was managers or performers, they were always glad to travel with any show that had Jason Robbins for their caterer.

Everybody around the show was fed by tickets. Whether it be manager, performer or Indian, no one could enter the cook tent without a ticket. Mrs. Robbins traveled with her husband and was always seen at the entrance of the workingmen's cook tent taking tickets. After the supper hour was over all the tickets were gathered up and taken to the ticket wagon and Mr. Robbins was paid in full every day.

He usually hired six cooks and from forty to fifty waiters and dish washers and other helpers made up the number to about sixty-five people.

A different contract was made with



the show each season, usually varying some on account of the price of provisions, but I never knew him to receive over twenty five cents a meal.

Jason Robbins massed two good sized fortunes in this business, the first one of which he lost the greater part of with the Burr Robbins show, mostly on account of the high prices of provisions and only having a quarter of the usual amount of people to care for. But he was never without a job in this line of work for the reason that he excelled in it and anyone of the big shows was always glad to let a contract to Jason Robbins. In what was known as the officer's cook tent, you could always go there and get a better meal than you could get at the average hotel.

The last time he was here with the Buffalo Bill show he gave a dinner for a few Janesville friends whom he had known years before. My wife and myself were among the guests. It was as high class as you could get in a first class restaurant in the city.

For several years before retiring from the business Mr. Robbins began investing his spare money in Brooklyn and New York business property and a number of years ago retired from business independently rich and with a name second to none in his line of work.

Mr. Robbins contracted for his meat, wood, vegetables and everything used in his business many weeks in advance of the show. He bought the best of everything, and in this way only was it possible for him to make money although he served on an average of upwards of 2000 meals a day.

In this line of work, Adam Forepaugh was the only showman who ran all the privileges connected with his show himself. He was the first man in the show business to organize and run a cook tent and board his own people. For many years with the railroad show he ran a dining car on the train where he boarded all the managers and performers, only the working people being boarded on the grounds.

But this did not prove a success in every way for the reason that in bad weather many times the railroad yards would be a mile and a half or two miles from the show grounds where the performers and managers

would have to go for their meals. For the last few years that Mr. Forepaugh was in the business, he abandoned the dining car and went back to the old style of the officers cook tent. This was much more convenient for the people and less expensive for Mr. Forepaugh than dividing them up in two different places.

The average person would think it hardly possible for a man in a few years to amass two good sized fortunes in catering to working people with a circus where the prices ran from eighteen cents to twenty five cents a meal. This was only made possible by good management and the amount of meals served every day.

There is still one department of the show that I wish to tell you about and that is what is known as the dressing room. The dressing room is one large round topped tent and divided by canvas partitions into three different departments, one known as the ladies' dressing room, the other the gentlemen's and the third as the horses' dressing room.

In this horses' dressing room, long before time for the show to open, all the riding horses were brought in there where trappings were kept and they were all fitted out with their different paraphernalia according to the acts they were to do.

In the ladies' and gentlemen's dressing rooms each of the performers had their own trunk. The property men whose business it was to unload these trunks and pile them in the dressing room well knew where they went. Their trunks were opened up and dressing cases, such as they were able to carry, were put up and each one allowed just so much space in the dressing room.

Of all these the ones most interesting for me to watch get ready for their different acts were the clowns. They had more wardrobes, more pants and frills, and it usually took them three times as long as the average performer to get ready for their acts. This dressing room to the average outsider would be possibly even

more interesting to visit than the big show itself.

I have been requested at different times by friends who were visiting the show to be taken back into the dressing rooms where the people were getting ready for their different acts. When it would come time for the show to commence, I have often heard them say, "I'd rather stay here and watch these people get ready for their acts than to see the show. I have seen many a big show, but this is my first visit to a dressing room."

More than once I have turned them over to some performer in the dressing room to look after and they would spend the entire afternoon or evening there and not even get a glimpse at the show. More than once I have had them come out to the ticket wagon after the show was all over and say, "That's the best show that I have ever seen."

February 22, 1913

Years ago with both the Adam Forepaugh and the Barnum shows there were many men known about the shows as "old timers." This meant that they had been there for years and it goes without saying that they were faithful servants or their places would have been filled long before by others. Many of these men bore fictitious names and one in particular was a Pennsylvania Dutchman who was known by the name of "Front Door Ike."

It was Ike's business to put up and take down the main entrance to the show, to carry the ticket boxes back and forth to the ticket wagon and he was always there and faithful to his charge. I heard Mr. Forepaugh say one day, "Some of these old timers are like a mortgage on a farm. Hard to get rid of."

"Front Door Ike" heard him make this remark and he said, "Well, Governor, I don't know much about mortgages, but I have been here long enough to see you make money enough to raise many a mortgage." Mr. Forepaugh said it only in a joking way for there was no man living that could take the place of "Front Door Ike."



It made no difference to Adam Forepaugh how old the men were, if they had been faithful servants, he would each year drop them down if he thought their work was too hard and give them something easier, but their salaries always remained the same.

Ike was a thrifty German, always saved his money and had a few hundred dollars to put on interest every fall when the show closed. The Girard Hotel in Philadelphia was one of the first class hostleries in those days and Ike always went there and worked as a porter during the winter.

It made no difference to the managers of the Girard Hotel how many men they had, when the show closed, there was always room for "Front Door Ike."

On the workingmen's payroll for both drivers and canvasmen they not only had a name but a number. A few of them, I still recollect, when they would form in line every Saturday night to get their pay, each man would call out his name and number. It was "Front Door Ike, Number 203."

A great many of these workingmen had nicknames which they went by around the show and also on the payroll. There was one old timer around the show who went by the name of Bobby Burns. This name was given him because of his nationality. On the payroll it was, "Bobby Burns, Number 1," and as Bobby was not a very thrifty saver, he was usually the first one in line waiting for his week's salary. I usually depended on hearing "Bobby Burns, Number 1" when the payroll was opened.

Some years after I quit the business my wife and I were invited to Chicago where Buffalo Bill's show was billed for a four week's engagement at the Coliseum. We were there as the guests of Joseph McCaddon and his wife, Mr. McCaddon being a brother of Mrs. James A. Bailey and manager of the Buffalo Bill show of which Mr. McCaddon owned half interest.

When the show was over we noticed an old stoop shouldered

working man coming across the building with his soft hat under his arm and a smile on his face, and before he got very near to us he hollered out, "It's only Bobby Burns, Number 1."

After Bobby shook hands with us and we had exchanged greetings, I asked him how old he was and how long he was going to stay in the business. Bobby said he would be 73 his next birthday and that he would never quit the show business. There were always a few of these old characters around the show, and it would have been impossible for them to take up any other line of work. In those days

Adam Forepaugh and James A. Bailey were noted for looking after faithful servants of this kind who had spent the best part of their lives in their employ.

Many of these old men are given employment at the winter quarters, some of them as helpers to the repairmen and others as night watchmen and various other jobs which they were competent to fill. Many of them had been there so long that although they were only workingmen, they were valuable in the spring when it came to refitting the show for the road.

Another man who started out with Mr. Forepaugh in his career in the show business was Dan Taylor, who for over thirty years was boss canvasman. He had charge of putting up and taking down all the canvas, and after Mr. Forepaugh's death went to the Barnum show and later to the Ringlings.

Dan Taylor was here four years ago with the Barnum show and had charge of all the repair work of the wagons and canvas. He was well posted on the price of everything in his department and anything that Dan Taylor O.K.'d the price on, it went without saying that it was well bought. He was then 78 years old and had been in the show business practically all his life. His home was in Philadelphia where he owned a nice home and had a wife and one daughter. In appearance he would readily

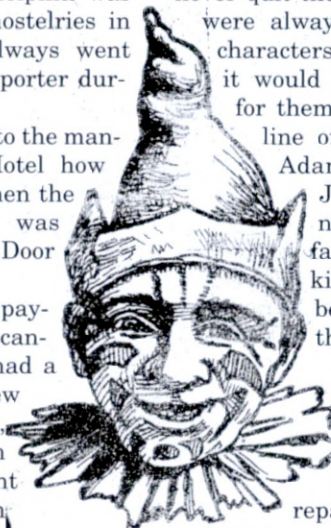
pass for a much younger man.

Another character with the show for some years was a man by the name of Max. This was the only name that he was known by around the show. He was the man who took the part of the old farmer delivering his milk to the city condensed factory. Max had an old bony horse, a platform spring wagon, well worn out, and a half a dozen milk cans. It was his business to get mixed up in the parade, and a disturbance would always call for some policeman to take care of the farmer and get him out of the way. If a policeman came near Max he would hit him over the head with his whip and say that he paid as many taxes as the average man and he had a right to drive anywhere he pleased on the streets.

Max would always find the chief in the morning and tell him his stunt that he always pulled off and ask the chief if he had a new policeman or one on his staff that was always anxious to make arrests, and if so to put him on a prominent corner where, when he put him under arrest, the crowds would get it back on him. Many a time the policeman would drag Max off to jail and lock him up only to find out a little later that the joke was on him.

Max stayed with the show for several seasons during the summer and was always in demand with the museums in the winter. At different times Max had worked for several years for Kohl and Middleton of Chicago who owned several museums at that time. I once heard Ed Kohl say to Max, "You never need to be without work. If you ever have an open day, you can always drop in here and go to work."

Max was a nice gentleman, well educated and only 24 years old at the time and was said to be one of the best in his peculiar line of work which in those days carried a good big salary with it. Max with the Forepaugh show never got less than \$75 per week and all his expenses. I have not heard from him for some years and whether there is still a demand for his kind of work, I cannot say, but whatever line he may be following, it is safe to say that Max, the old milk man impersonator, does credit to it.



March 1, 1913

Three years ago last September 1 was in Milwaukee on some business and on the billboards of the Majestic Theater there I noticed the headliner of the bill was Sam Watson and his farmyard circus. Sam Watson was an Englishman by birth and for many years had been a famous bareback rider with the Adam Forepaugh show. As soon as the show would close

in the fall he would go over to Europe and look after the performers, animals and costumes for the coming season. He was what was known as the old school of circus people and a high class gentleman in every way.

I stepped to the box office and asked the man in charge if he could tell me where Mr. Watson was stopping. He gave me the name of his hotel and I started out and found him in a few minutes. I had not seen Sam Watson in twenty years, and it was some time before he could place me. In the meantime he had married in England and his wife was at the hotel with him. He immediately called her down to the office and said, "I want to introduce you to one of my old time friends with the Forepaugh show. This man paid me off every Wednesday for many years."

I asked him what he was doing there and what kind of act he had. This was about 10 o'clock in the morning and the Watsons soon had me on the way to the theater to show me their farmyard circus. Here he had pigs, chickens, sheep and a gander which he had trained to do almost everything but talk. At the theatre we met several other people who were rehearsing their acts for the afternoon show and Sam Watson and his wife gave a dinner to twelve of us on the stage.

They had the dinner brought in from the Schlitz Hotel and it was the best that money could procure. All this time he was telling me how he came to be in the business. He said, "You know as I grew older the riding was not quite as good and I well knew that it would only be a matter

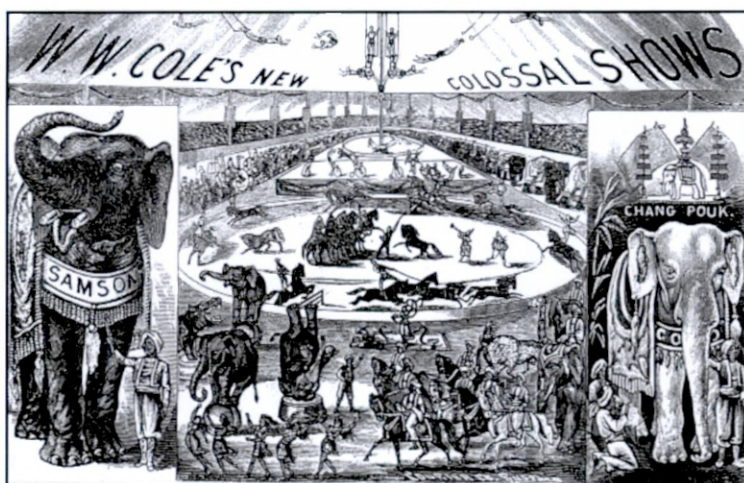


Illustration from an 1885 W. W. Cole Circus courier.

of time till I would need a new act. So I took a season off and commenced gathering up these animals that you see here and training them, and within a year's time was ready to start out a show of this kind in a vaudeville circuit and I am now billed six weeks ahead at \$600 per week and no open dates. My wife and myself give the show and the only other person in the act is a young man who takes care of the stock."

For the past five or six years Sam Watson and his farm yard circus have made themselves famous all over the United States. I heard from him only two weeks ago and he has been showing at all the different theatres in New York, Boston and Philadelphia all winter. He is always in demand for this is the only act of the kind in the country. He says, "You know I have no competition in this line of work and the bareback riders are plenty all over the country." In the last few years he has taken good care of his money and could retire any time with plenty of this world's goods.

I heard from another old friend a few days ago, but I mentioned something about his career in these columns several weeks ago. This man was known in the show business as W. W. Cole. His full name was William Washington Cole. "Billie" Cole as he was known around his show was different from any other showman I ever knew in more ways than one. He had the distinction in show business as being the only man who became famous and rich in the

business whose picture never appeared on the billboards or in a newspaper. He was a quiet, unassuming man and but few people of the millions who witnessed his show for years had the honor of meeting him, and if they did, they never knew who he was. While he was always the real manager of his show, he had a working manager and he was seldom seen in active

management of the show. W. W. Cole first started in the business as a peanut peddler. Later in his life when he became the owner of a show of his own, most of his savings went into business property in New York City. Some of his holdings there now date back at least thirty years.

Only week before last he bought one of the best known and most famous corners in New York City for which he paid one million dollars and immediately will commence the erection of a twenty-two story skyscraper office building. The property is on the corner of 26th Street and Broadway running through to Fifth Avenue. Probably more people in the United States know this corner better than any other in New York City for it was on this corner that the famous Delmonico Restaurant was located, which was famous the world over for more than forty years.

While we were showing at Madison Square Garden one spring I went to Delmonico's and had dinner and the dent that the cashier put in me when I came to settle can still be seen with the naked eye. But I was like the young man who made a trip to Europe and came back on the same boat that he went on. When his friends asked him why he came back so soon, he said, "Do you know I don't care anything about Europe, but I did want to have it to say to my friends that I'd been there."

When W. W. Cole passes away, he will leave many a monument in the shape of a skyscraper in New York City that he once lived, and not in vain. All this only goes to show how a young man although starting his

career as a peanut vendor, if he has good business ability, is saving and knows how to invest his money, the outcome must be the right side of the ledger. Although Mr. Cole is nearly three score and ten years, he would pass for a much younger man and may he live long and enjoy the fruits of his labor.

March 8, 1913

Early in the spring of eighteen eighty, something like ten days or two weeks before the Burr Robbins show took the road for the summer, I was standing with Delavan, the boss hostler, in front of the office of the show on Eastern Avenue when a tall, dignified looking gentleman turned the corner of Eastern Avenue and the Beloit Road and came toward the office.

Delavan said to me, "Take a look at that gentleman. If he is an actor he is certainly a high class one." His dress and bearing would indicate that he was the president of a railroad rather than a circus performer. He came up to me and asked me if my name was Watt, and when I answered it was, he said, "My name is Sam McFlinn."

Mr. Robbins was in Chicago on some business and he had referred Mr. McFlinn to me. Sam McFlinn was what was known in those days as a singing clown. A one ring show in those days that had a singing clown was supposed to be strictly in it. Sam McFlinn stood six feet tall, was a fine dresser and a good looker and with all a nice gentleman.

He stayed with the show two seasons and later, in a small way, took out a show of his own. About this time or possibly the next season, he married the youngest daughter of Dr. Thayer who at one time had been a prosperous circus man owning a show of his own, but for a couple of years had been connected with the Buff Robbins show.

Mrs. McFlinn took charge of the front door and looked after the finances of the show of which she knew something before she was married. Sam McFlinn kept his show in the small towns where such a show naturally belonged and where he

PROCLAIMING THE ADVENT OF THE WORLD'S NOVELTY
THE KID-GLOVE CANVAS SHOW
ON THIS REASON.

SAM MACFLINN'S
THE ONLY REGULATIVE
GILT-EDGE POPULAR-PRIZE SHOW!

**NEW GREAT EUROPEAN
GIGANTIC SHOWS**
THE ONLY BRAND NEW CANVAS SHOW.

ALL-STAR ALL-STAR ALL-STAR
EXHIBITION
PERFORMERS.

100 ALL-STAR
A TEST
PERFORMERS.

THE SUNRISE
OF A NEW
CANVAS UNDISPUTED
AT PEOPLE'S PRICES.

WIRE ACTING
WHEELS
POURD PRATICES
STARTLING SCENES

PUBLIC DEMAND
HERE THIS COUNTRY

EVERY PROMISE
AT ENTICING
SACRED PRIZES

MILD ITS BOAST
AND THIS TRAVELING
ITH TRIUMPH

AN ASTONISHING AGGREGATION OF ASTOUNDING ACTS AND ARTISTS
For this year's Confederated Quadruplication we have obtained More New and Never-Before Exhibited
Important Features than any other Show has Features all field. Countless are its Attractions.
In Elegance, Morality and Novelty, Great are its Many Triumphs. Marvelous in the Extent
of its Enormous World's Wonders, Classic in its Refinement, and Superior in



Part of a 1888 Sam McFlinn Circus
herald. Pfening Archives.

could keep his expenses down and prospered for some years, laying by a neat little sum of money each year.

The show usually wintered in Chicago and all the spare money the McFlinns could get together was invested in Chicago real estate. After a few years of prospering with what they already had saved, the McFlinns made up their minds to sell the show and retire from the business. It was about the close of the

Samual H. MacFlinn, old time show-
man. Pfening Archives.



season some time along in the latter part of the eighties and the money they received through the sale of the show was also invested in Chicago real estate.

Sam McFlinn was a good businessman, and all his holdings in Chicago were bought at bottom prices. They had no children and the last I knew of them a few years ago, they were living on the south side in Chicago in a fine home; and as their income was considerably more than their living expenses, Sam was steadily adding to his holdings. Only a few years ago I heard through a friend that his property on the south side was worth several times more than it cost him. This was all made possible through the saving of a little out of each week's salary as clown with a circus.

In eighteen eighty-four many of the performers with the Adam Forepaugh show were brought over from Europe as had been the usual practice for many years. Among the best was a mother and daughter by the name of Lowande. The Lowande family for generations back in Europe were known as a family of circus people, most of whom had been riders.

Julia Lowande that season was the principal bareback rider, and as she was only seventeen years old, her mother traveled with her. They were two of the nicest people that I ever knew around the show. As soon as Julia's riding act was over in the afternoon you could always find her in the ladies' dressing room either making something that added to her wardrobe or her street clothes.

They stayed with the Forepaugh show for several years after which Julia married a circus man by the name of [Ed] Shipp. With the money that the two had saved they bought a fine home in Petersburg, Illinois, and here they built a ring barn where Julia would practice during the winter.

Three years ago they were both here, she and her husband with the Ringling show. She was riding as good an act as she ever did and she told me that she had a daughter almost eighteen years of age who

would graduate that fall from a ladies' seminary down east. This she said was their only child. I have not seen them since, but they still make their home in Petersburg, Illinois, and I know that everyone in Petersburg is glad to claim the Shipp family as their friends.

The old mother who had looked after Julia so diligently for so many years died some years ago, but not until she had seen her daughter married to a nice gentleman and settled in a good home. But as Julia Lowande, as I knew her, must now be nearing the fifty mark, her circus career must be drawing to a close. In years to come she can look back over her career in the circus business in America with pride, for no one ever left a better name in the business than Julia Lowande.

One English performer whom I call to mind was a man by the name of Leonati. Leonati rode a small bicycle down a winding spiral from the top of the center pole. For this act he received \$350 per week and all his expenses. He told me that while he had never had a serious accident, he always dreaded to go to the top of that center pole and come down, around and around the center pole several times before landing.

The spiral he came down was only twelve inches wide and with nothing on the sides to keep his wheel from going off. He told me that he practiced for the act nearly two years in Europe before he started out, and in that country he did the act for as little as ten pounds a week which amounted to about \$50 in our money. But it was a great act and one of the features with the Forepaugh show that year.

After making a hit in the country and going back to Europe, he was in demand all over that country at a much greater salary than he had ever received there before, but never got the price that Adam Forepaugh paid him in this country in eighteen eighty-four.

He invested his money in a town in England of about 50,000 inhabitants, the name of which I have forgotten, his first purchase being the principal hotel in the town. At this business he prospered and a few years later bought some ground adjoining the



Julia Lowande a feature lady rider on the Forepaugh show in 1884. Pfening Archives.

hotel upon which he erected a fine theatre. He is still living and both his hotel and his theatre are money-makers, and Leonati, who got his first start by riding a bicycle down a spiral, is one of the wealthy men of the town. These are a few instances of people whom I knew in the business many years ago who have made good to the end.

March 15, 1913

Today down in Chicago there are hundreds of old time showmen gathered to renew old acquaintances and talk of the organization of a national home for the aged and inform circus employees in that city. Buffalo Bill, one of the oldest of the old time ring showmen now in active service, will be in his glory. At the "Lot," the Hotel LaSalle, there will be many a greeting of old comrades that have not seen each other for years.

Once a circus man always a circus man is true in most cases. Many of us retired from active work in the "Big Tops" years ago but still our interest is just as keen as it ever was, and these are the days when the trooping fever is hardest to resist. The circus kings of today were unknown showmen a decade or so ago. The old showman, like the old horse, always

snorts with delight when the band begins to play and the procession starts on its daily pilgrimage.

As I write these articles, many memories of the past come to mind that I try to place before my readers' eyes in the same light that I see them. Old times are not forgotten and old days bring back thoughts of the past and the men who were in the business when I was. Of course all did not become rich and prominent, but the hard workers did. Many a man who now holds responsible positions of trust and public confidence in various parts of the country served his apprenticeship on the canvas tops in some capacity or other. It is interesting to note their progress and recall old days.

In the early eighties with the Forepaugh show a young man came to the ticket wagon and asked if there was any kind of a position that a young man like him might fill around the show. He was a pale faced, sickly looking chap of about 21 years of age. I said to him, "Young man, you have not quite the build for heavy work, and clerical work that you might be able to do around the show is all pretty well filled up." I told him there might be a position open to sell reserve seat tickets on the inside of the show and asked him if he thought he could do the work. He said he would be only to glad to try it. He said he had a fair education and his appearance showed plainly that he had been well bred and well brought up. He went to work selling reserve seat tickets that evening and stayed with the show two or three years and never in all that time did any complaint ever come from his reserve seat ticket stand of any kind. He was always civil and polite to everybody and he soon made friends with everyone connected with the show.

With the thousands that were coming and going from the show in the different departments this young man had gone from my mind and only occasionally have I thought of him for years. While I knew his home was in Missouri, I had forgotten the name of the town and it has been at least twenty-five years since I had heard from him until last Thursday, the 13th of this month. On the 15th

of February this year the New York *Clipper* published a portrait of mine and a copy of this paper fell into the hands of this young man whose name is Homer Martin. His home is in Bowling Green, Missouri, where he is clerk of the circuit court of Pike County. He sat down and wrote the New York *Clipper* office for my address. Below I will give you a copy of his letter. That I was surprised as well as pleased in hearing from my old friend, Homer Martin, goes without saying. We had spent several years together which were pleasant ones in more ways than one.

Bowling Green, Mo., March 10th, 1913, Warren A. Patrick, Esq., Chicago, Dear Sir:

In the issue of the New York *Clipper* bearing date of February 15, 1913, you have a cut of D. W. Watt, but I fail to find any information as to his residence, etc. I would like very much to have the address of Mr. Watt. My reason for wanting same is purely a personal one. Mr. Watt and I put in several years together with the old Forepaugh show back in the early eighties.

Your "Joe Hepp" is very interesting reading for an old timer, particularly when he is out of the business and in the tall grass as I am. I knew the original personality; in fact, I have done a little business with him years ago.

Thanking you in advance for the information asked for and with best wishes, I am Very truly yours, HOMER MARTIN Clerk of the Circuit Court of Pike County.

Among the wealthier of all the old showmen who have died and left fortunes of various sizes in years past was James A. Bailey, who for so many years was the partner and the real head of the Barnum show. James A. Bailey commenced his career in the show business when a very young man and well did he keep in the middle of the road at the business until a few years ago when he died at the age of about seventy years. Mr. Bailey left a fortune of between four and five millions and by the will it all went to the widow. They never had any children so the nearest heirs were brothers and sisters of whom I think there were four. But in the distribution of these millions

some of the heirs got dissatisfied and now the millions of James A. Bailey which he was a lifetime accumulating have gotten into the courts where it will probably be a long time before it is settled, the particulars of which I will give you below:

Special Dispatch to the *North American*, New York, January 21

The suit to break the will of Mrs. James A. Bailey, widow of P. T. Barnum's partner in the show business, was begun today in the Supreme Court at White Plains by Mrs. Anna Isabelle Hutchinson of Bridgeport, Mrs. Bailey's sister.

Mrs. Bailey died in Florida in March 1912. She inherited all her husband's estate, supposedly to be worth between \$4,000,000 and \$5,000,000.

About a month after Mr. Bailey's death, Mrs. Bailey made a will dividing practically all her fortune equally between her brothers and sisters. But in a second will made in 1908, she cut Mrs. Hutchinson down to a life annuity of \$10,000 a year.

Mrs. Hutchinson says she is entitled to one fourth of the estate. She asserts that in making the second will Mrs. Bailey was improperly influenced by her brother Joseph T. McCaddon.

March 22, 1913

This week I shall either interest or tire you with a description of the trip which I made last Friday and Saturday to attend a banquet at the LaSalle Hotel in Chicago given by the Showmen's League of America. The invitations for the two days read "come early and stay late," and I filled the bill. I not only went early, but stayed till the last strains of the music died out, which was long after the midnight hour.



On arriving in Chicago I went directly to the LaSalle Hotel where the automobiles were already lined up to take us on a trip to the South Side Stock Yards where we were to be the guests of the Swift Packing Company at a banquet at one o'clock. The Swift Company had sent one of their men to the LaSalle Hotel to take charge of us and to my surprise he was an old Janesville boy by the name of Henry Hart. Henry was born and educated in Janesville, but many years ago went to Chicago and is now one of the head men of the great Swift Packing Company.

Upon starting from the hotel each guest was handed a cane with a crook, which we could hang over our arm, and with a pennant attached with the initials S. L. A., meaning the Showmen's League of America. A few minutes after ten o'clock we were on Michigan Avenue and well started to the south part of the city. Arriving at the stock yards there were two other officers of the company who joined us and with Mr. Hart started out to show us the entire plant from start to finish.

Our first introduction was to what they called the killing room and from there were taken on through all the different departments of the plant, upstairs and down, into elevators and out, and it was well nigh the banquet hour when we finished up in what they called the butterine room.

Early in the start of our trip I heard a voice twenty-five or thirty feet ahead of me in the crowd and although it was a voice I had not heard for twenty years, it came to me in a second, and I yelled at the top of my voice, "You, Jasper." Jasper turned around and when he saw me he threw up his hands and said, "Has the resurrection day come?"

Jasper was in the show business but retired shortly after I commenced in the business many years ago. He was one of a trio of Watson athletes known as the Watson Brothers who were famous the world over. But one of the Watson brothers died which broke up the act and Jasper went to Chicago and found employment at the Windsor Hotel on Dearborn Street, just south of the new Tribune building.

Jasper was honest and faithful

in his work and it did not take him long to get to the front with Sam Greggston, who was a high class businessman. Jasper, after a few years, became manager of the Windsor Hotel for Mr. Greggston. Mr. Greggston's health failed several years ago and he made more than one trip to Europe for the benefit of his health, and Jasper became manager of the Windsor Hotel.

Mr. Greggston died some years ago and in his will left Jasper one thousand dollars as a reward for his faithful services. Jasper then went to the Swift Packing Company where he is now holding a responsible position. He told me he had been there between seven and eight years.

On this trip he said to me, "I want to introduce you to the oldest employee in the plant, W. P. Holder." This man was the first man to do killing for the Swift Company and it was nearly forty years ago. He had two assistants and four working men and they managed the first day to kill thirty-two head of cattle, which they thought was a big day's work, but now they kill several thousand. Mr. Holder has never been out of Swift & Company's employ since he started with them nearly forty years ago. He has a wife and son living at Benton Harbor, Michigan, where they have a nice fruit farm. Mr. Holder leaves Chicago every Saturday and spends Sunday with his family, usually going back to his work sometime Monday.

His work for the most part is overlooking the different departments to see that everything is going right. The old gentleman accompanied me to the banquet and sat to my left and opposite to Colonel Cody and Henry Hart. I introduced him to Col. Cody and they had a long visit. When we left the plant, which was something like two o'clock in the afternoon, the old gentleman bade us goodbye and he said, "I assure you this has been one of the bright spots of my life today."

We left there for the northwest of the city, about fourteen miles to the Selig Film Company's plant

which occupies an entire block. To me this was one of the most wonderful places that I ever visited. In less than one minute after our automobiles had pulled up in front of the plant, they took a picture of us arriving at their place and then ushered us into what they called the photographer's room on the second floor. In less than ten minutes we were greeting Col. Cody as he was arriving in Chicago for the banquet at the Northwestern Depot.

We were there some time as they took pictures of us in four different positions and it was well nigh five o'clock before we left the plant. At this place they employ about two hundred and fifty people. They have their own kitchen and dining room, bedrooms and bathrooms for the accommodation of people whom they hold there at times for several days to get their different productions. In the drying room of the plant, where they dry the films, they gave us a peek for a few seconds and the manager said that they could dry 500,000 feet of films there at one time. The next evening at the banquet on the nineteenth floor of the LaSalle Hotel we were given moving pictures and they all were those taken the night before at this wonderful plant. It was possible for this to all be brought about in twenty-four hours.

After arriving at the LaSalle Hotel on Friday evening, we were given a private banquet, nineteen of us, with Col. Cody, making twenty in all. This

William F. Cody at the Showman's League of America March 14, 1913.



lasted until about eight o'clock. Then a gentleman from the Cort Theatre stepped in and said we were to be the guests of the management of the Cort Theatre to a production of "Our Wives" that evening, and we were soon on our way to the theatre. This ended our first day's visit.

Saturday for the most part was taken up with business meetings of the league and taking in of new members. The object of this meeting was to bring showmen together from all over the United States in an effort to build a clubhouse and a home in Chicago for people who spent their lives entertaining the public and also for a home for showmen who had been less fortunate than their associates in laying by a competency for their old age. To the secretary of the company who was a former Janesville boy, Warren A. Patrick, whose mother still resides on East Street in this city, if it's brought to a successful ending, too much credit cannot be given. It was through his untiring efforts and a few of his associates that it was possible to bring this banquet about.

The officers of the company are: Hon. William F. Cody, "Buffalo Bill," president; Charles Andress, first vice-president; Frank L. Alfred, second vice-president and director of publicity and organization; U. J. Hermann, third vice-president and general fraternal counselor; Col. C. W. Parker, treasurer; Warren A. Patrick, Rhoda Royal, superintendent of paraphernalia.

But the big banquet was to come off Saturday night at seven o'clock and before that there were hundreds gathered there and taken to the eighteenth and nineteenth floors of the hotel. The dressing rooms and the checking rooms were on the eighteenth floor and the banquet hall which is known as the Louis XVI room on the nineteenth floor, occupying the entire frontage of the hotel on Madison Street.

At the main entrance of the dining room was an exact reproduction of the main entrance to a big

show. The iron stakes and the chains and the words, "Main Entrance to the Big Show," were just like one of the large circuses. The banquet was ready, the ticket takers were at the door, the barkers were out in front, the man up on a tall stool beckoned and pleaded to the people not to rush, "Take your time. We have seats inside for more than 15,000 people and the last ones in will get as good a seat as the first."

Vaudeville people of the highest quality were engaged for the evening. As soon as we were seated at the table the vaudeville commenced on the stage. Here all the acrobatic and contortionist acts were given. Down in front of the stage were singers. There were three ladies and one gentleman walking two and two up and down the banquet hall singing and finally commenced to sing, *Strolling Down the Shady Lane*. When two of the ladies got near "Buffalo Bill's" table he dropped his napkin and stepped in between them and marched up and down the hall singing with them.

The banquet and the vaudeville show lasted till about eleven o'clock



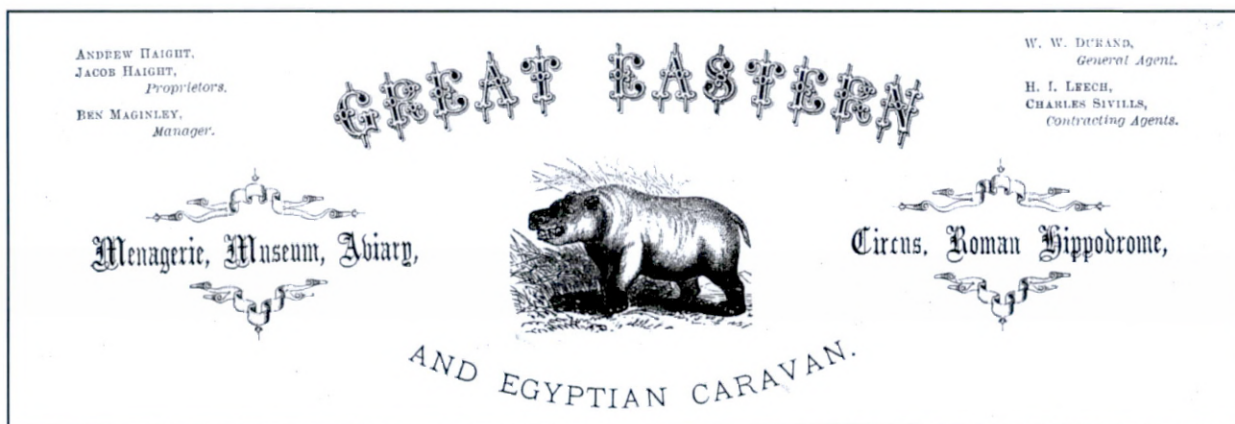
and then commenced the speech making. Two or three attorneys who were noted for their after dinner talks were there and gave some interesting stories on shows and show people. Several others were called upon and gave short talks stories, but the last to be called on and the star of the banquet was William F. Cody, "Buffalo Bill." He talked for some time and told us interesting stories of his life, the pleasures and hardships that he had gone through and of the famous people whom he had known and met the world over. When he got to where he wanted to stop and sit down the crowd wouldn't have it. They kept him on the floor for more than an hour and a half, telling his experiences and all together it was certainly the most

interesting talk I ever have listened to.

There were famous men from all over the United States at the banquet. There were telegrams sent from every state in the Union regretting that they could not attend, but in attendance were many men famous the world over, among whom were William Pinkerton, the head of the Pinkerton Detective Agency; James J. Brady, one of the foremost theatrical men of the day and one of the largest producers; E. B. Daly who for many years was in the show business and now is a resident of Chicago; Charles Bell, who has been in the business for more than thirty years; and many others who were famous in the business for many years, men who have done things in the world and are still doing them.

But I must not tire you with too long a story this time for if I burn all my powder on this hunt, I can't go again. I will try and tell you more about it next week. But in closing, I want to say that although it stormed almost constantly for two days, they were two days of perpetual sunshine for me.

Bill Kasiska's Letterheads



This Great Eastern Menagerie, Museum, Aviary, Circus, Roman Hippodrome and Egyptian Caravan letterhead was used in 1873. Andrew and Jacob Haight were the owners. It is printed in black.

ONLY BIG SHOW COMING

No Gambling Devices Tolerated

Vol. V, CHAPTER 6, PART THREE

By Orin Copple King

1898

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Orin Copple King

P. S. Mattox, manager of Buffalo Bill's advance Car No. 1, was in Hutchinson on August 22 billing the town for exhibitions on Monday, September 12, 1898. Along with Mattox was press agent Whitney Allen who did a superb job of grabbing newspaper space for Col. Cody. Allen's job was made easier by Buffalo Bill's exploits in Kansas before the Civil War.

The first mention of the coming of Cody to Hutchinson appeared in the *Clipper* on August 10: "Hon. Wm. F. Cody, the world-wide known showman, will exhibit his Wild West Show in Hutchinson, Sept. 12th. His is a unique and interesting exhibition, and with the patriotism of the people aflame and the movements of the army and navy of paramount interest it is impossible to conceive of anything that could more powerfully appeal to the public at this time in the way of amusement attraction than Buffalo Bill's Wild West and Congress of Rough Riders of the World.

It is no mere show intended to provide diversion for an afternoon and evening, and yet as an entertainment it is beyond all measure the most diverting. Its real value lies in the fact that it is, more than anything else, an international military tournament. There is not space here to mention all the features of this great exhibition but mention must be made of the insurgent veterans fresh from the battlefields, prisons and hospitals of Cuba;

the magnificent military spectacle, Custer's Last Battle (sic). It is the same superb show, man for man and horse for horse, that opened this season with a month at Madison Square Garden, New York City; the same show of which the great editor, Murat Halsted said: 'It is Somebody's crime if all the children do not see it.' Excursion rates will be made on all roads on this day to the Wild West show."

The *Clipper* also noted that, "at Saginaw, Michigan, Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show gave a performance on July 16 to fifteen thousand people."



Courier used by Buffalo Bill in 1898. Pfening Archives.

Another handout a week later nearly canonized Buffalo Bill: "Attempts have been made to prove that Robert Fulton did not discover the power of steam, that Morse was not the inventor of telegraphy, that the telephone did not originate with Edison (sic), that Shakespeare's plays were written by Francis Bacon, and that Buffalo Bill isn't Buffalo Bill. The last named attempt was the maddest of all. If there ever was a man called Buffalo Bill, he was not known through the west when that title was conferred upon W. F. Cody, and to this day he has never come to the front to assert his claim.

"There is but one Buffalo Bill. And he is the most widely known American today, living or dead. The

quantity of prose and poetry, history and fiction, that has been printed about him in books, magazines and newspapers, if measured up, would undoubtedly exceed the printed matter published concerning any historical character, with possibly the solitary exception of Napoleon Bonaparte.

"In his poem 'Columbia to Buffalo Bill,' Hugh Wetmore, the western poet, mentions the fact that on his European tour Buffalo Bill received homage from countries that 'bowed not to Bonaparte's sway,' meaning, of course, the British kingdom particularly.

"Buffalo Bill was honored by the nations of Europe but the queen of England tried hard to outdo all the other crowned heads by the attention which she showed the distinguished American. Her majesty showered diamonds upon him, and it is said that the queen found but one fault with the recent jubilee celebration, and that was on account of the absence of the celebrated scout.

"One of the questions which has caused many a dispute is Buffalo Bill's age. One frequently overhears the assertion made that this knight of the plains has been before the public for sixty years. There is no excuse for this mistake. He was born in 1848, and at the age of ten years, in 1858 shot his first Indian. This heroic act, which helped materially to save himself and companions from massacre, made him famous, and chroniclers have never wearied of writing about him from that day to this.

"He is still under fifty, and if his hair is touched by frost, it is the result of commencing very young, and enduring excessive hardships.

"The world knows him as a pony

express rider, freighter, stage-driver, trapper, hunter, soldier, scout marshal, justice of the peace, legislator and educator—for his congress of rough riders was organized originally by Col. Cody with the laudable intent to enlighten the world in regard to the then unknown empire of the west—but much that would prove interesting remains to be written

regarding that period of his life which was the brightest to him, before his mother died, while he was acting as the sole protector of his widowed mother and his baby sisters. That fond mother was wont to predict that her son would one day be the president of the United States. Could she have lived she would have had the gratification of seeing him decline a nomination to the United States senate, and to have read in a hundred western journals a proposal to run him for the highest office in the land. If that heroic mother had lived, all this might have interested him, for her sake; but politics never seemed to have any charm for him.

"In the language of the marts, he has made oceans of money, and he has expended millions of his wealth trying to develop his beloved west.

"The present season his vast ranches in Nebraska, on the North Platte and on the Dismal river will yield an immense harvest, and his big irrigation scheme in the Big Horn basin, in Wyoming, whereby he is reclaiming and colonizing hundreds of thousands of acres of valuable land, will have a boom.

"In the year 1900 Buffalo Bill will again take his educational exhibition to Paris, where he was immortalized in bronze and in oil, and where his show rivalled the Eiffel tower as an attraction at the last exposition."

The Kansas press could not suppress its infatuation for Col. Cody and columns of praise for the great man spewed forth in the newspapers. Cody was indeed a hero before he became a showman and he was honored for many truly dangerous feats



The wild west lot layout as pictured in the 1898 courier. Pfening Archives.

he accomplished in the service of the United States military. To have personally known Buffalo Bill was enough for the common man to become, himself, a celebrity of sorts.

Some of the handouts accented other aspects of the show, such as the following from the *Hutchinson Clipper*: "A military feature in Buffalo Bill's Wild West is the part taken by Sergeant Brothwell and a corps of furloughed men from the Fifth U. S. Artillery, who show how the artillery is managed in the time of war. The two cannons that are drawn by the twelve horses, six to each cannon, have a history of their own. One was captured after a hard-fought battle in the civil war and was donated by the Government to the monument to General Kilpatrick. It arrived too late and was purchased by Nate Salsbury. The other gun was captured at Gettysburg from the rebels. The cannoneers spur the horses up to a furious speed, suddenly turn and come to a dead stop, leap off and the next instant the guns are detached, loaded and fired. Another second and they are off again, guiding and galloping animals and the gun between the two rows of stakes that leaves a margin of but two inches outside of the wheels. These and other illustrations of perfect drill and masterly driving have heretofore been confined to army posts or occasional State encampments; hence they have been seen by comparatively few people and possess much novel interest for the masses."

The *Clipper* on September 7 was heavily sprinkled with brief remarks in its news columns: "Remember

September 12th.

"Boys, Buffalo Bill will show how they use (sic) to hunt the buffalo, and use live buffalo to do so.

"Buffalo Bill's Wild West show will give one of the finest exhibitions ever given in this city, September 12.

"What the children see at Buffalo Bill's Wild West they will enjoy, appreciate, understand and remember. What

parents see there they will wish their children taught.

"Buffalo Bill's Wild West, on its three immense special trains of sixty cars, can travel further in a day than the historic old Deadwood Mail Coach . . . could have done in a month.

"The seating arrangements for Buffalo Bill's Wild West exhibition are the most perfect imaginable. The spectators are roofed in from the sun or the rain, but are practically in the open air, the performance being given in a huge open enclosure, almost surrounded by the spectators. The intense heat, which would be unbearable in a circus tent, is thus avoided. Seventy-six arc lamps are strung around the inclosure, making it at night as light as day. The electric power is furnished by Buffalo Bill's own light plant, the engines being shown in the parade. These are double dynamos of 250,000 candle power."

Louis Breunsbach and two other Nebraska farm boys saw the show on a wet day. The plank they were told to sit on was too wet for them. An usher offered to provide dry seats for ten cents each. The boys paid their dimes and the usher turned the plank over.

"There are circuses and circuses, and one or more of them comes around, in the old-fashioned way, every year. But there is only one Buffalo Bill's Wild West and those who fail to see its wonderful, original and singular historic, heroic, equestrian, martial and other exclusive features here on Monday, September 12th, may lose the one chance of a life time."

On account of the wild west show the opening of Hutchinson's public schools was postponed from Monday to Tuesday.

On September 14 the *Clipper* reported that, "Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show has come and gone. Despite the inclemency of the weather, this large aggregation was greeted by an immense crowd. Everybody wanted to see Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, and when the opportunity presented itself they took advantage of it. The exhibition was both absolutely original and genuine from start to finish. None were disappointed in a single anticipation. The parade which was on time was grand, and was witnessed by thousands of people, as also was the performance given North of the city in the afternoon and evening. Col. Cody has gathered about him a band of Indians that are the real thing, taken from Government reservations by permission of the department of the Interior. He has cowboys that have spent a great many years punching cattle and riding bucking horses. He has the only herd of buffaloes to be found this side of the Rockies. Those who did not avail themselves of the opportunity of seeing this superb and magnetic illustration of later American history, pioneer life, wild and wonderful international equitation, cavalry reviews, artillery drills, battle scenes, Bedouin gymnastics, bareback riding, dances on horseback, feats of frontier marksmanship; its bucking broncos, savage Sioux (sic) chiefs and braves, singular people from strange foreign climes, lariat and bolas experts and other notable features, do not imagine what they missed seeing. The thundering of the horses' hoofs, the snorting of fiery steeds, the tramp and roar of the moving mass, the waving of flags

and pennants, the flaunting of the plumes of the riders and the flashing of lances, spears and sabres, sent through the spectators an electric flood of vital sympathy with the wild energy, martial force and heroic grace of the army of Centaurs. An illustration of Custer's battle was one of the striking features, and another one was the big pyramid of ten men of which a Samsonian Bedouin is the Herculean base. Buffalo Bill's Wild West, surely is a marvel, the like of which was never seen until Col. Cody conceived and brought it forward, and will never again be seen after the great scout has passed away."

The show received the same attention in the Wichita press as it did in Hutchinson, but the *Wichita Herald* did it in German.

The day before the exhibitions at Independence on September 15, the *South Kansas Tribune* expressed some concerns: "Tomorrow there will

be an immense crowd in town to attend the Wild West Show, and with it will come a lot of burglars, horse thieves and confidence men. Don't go away and leave your house unprotected. It is rumored that two cars of beer have been ordered to fill our streets with drunkards, and the city has no ordinance against beer selling, and therefore the county authorities will have the responsibility."

This ad appeared in the *Emporia Weekly Republican* on September 8, 1898. Kansas State Historical Society.

Following show day the *Tribune* reported that, "The Wild West Show of Col. Cody drew the largest crowd ever in the city, and fully 9,000 people witnessed the afternoon performance, and a large crowd was there at night. The exhibition was as represented, the Indians and rough riders of the world were there, the buffalo, the

bucking ponies and all. The people were pleased, and the management are said to have taken in more money than at any place up to that date in Kansas."

There was no mention of the two cars of beer.

The *Topeka Daily Capital* reported the presence on show day, September 19, of Dexter W. Fellows who became one of the most admired press agents in circus history.

The best review of the Kansas tour appeared in the *Capital* the day after the performances.

"Some day a genius is going to rise up and write a piece on the passing of the circus. Some day a faithful historian will describe the zoological collections that used to delight the fathers of the present day and their children, but which must surely fail of creating enthusiasm in their children's children.

"When that historian makes his bid for fame he will ascribe the degeneracy of the old time circus to this: It has given way to the Wild West show.

"The people, who are pleased with a rattle and tickled with a straw, demand new things—or at least a new dress for old things. The people got what they demand in Buffalo Bill's show which struck the city yesterday.

"Every train into the city yesterday was loaded. The Santa Fe ran specials and towns along the route were practically depopulated. The Rock Island flyer stopped at Maple Hill and got all the able-bodied inhabitants—that is, all that were visible. The Union Pacific and the Missouri Pacific also did a big passenger business into Topeka yesterday.

"Kansas Avenue, while the parade was passing, gave a good imitation of the Fall Festival last year. The multitude was not content with keeping on side-walk but crowded out on the pavement and close up against Colonel Cody's choice collection of Cossacks, rough riders, perambulating electric light plants, etc.

"The wild west show was witnessed by about 18,000 people, afternoon and evening.

"Buffalo Bill will always draw crowds in Kansas towns. He cut a



Emporia, Sept. 17
 Twice Daily, 2 and 8 p. m.—Rain or Shine.
 THE SHOW OF SHOWS
 BIGGER AND BETTER THAN EVER.
 THERE'S SHOW THAT BEATS SOMETHING.
 INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TOURNAMENT!
 "It is somebody's crime if all the children do not see it."—The Great Editor, *World's Illustrated*.

BUFFALO BILL'S

WILD WEST
 And Congress of Rough Riders of the World.
 Soldiers of all Nations

SIXTH U. S. CAVALRY—The Army's Finest Riders.
 FIFTH U. S. ARTILLERY—Double Light Battery in Field Drill and
 Report Drilling. Artillery in Action, seen as in actual warfare.
 FIFTH ROYAL IRISH LANCERS.
 NINTH USMAR COSACKS.
 FIRST GERMAN GUARDSMEN

Color Guard
 Of the Single Handed Foe of CUBA LEONE.
 20 CUBAN HEROES.
 Twelve officers and privates whose wounds prevent them from doing actual service in the field.

great figure in the early history of Kansas, and Kansans regard him as one of them still, although he has made his home in Nebraska for many years.

"Colonel Cody is fifty-three years old. He is in robust health, but his hair is rapidly turning gray, and he does not dash around like he used to. For instance, he has quit riding his horse in the parade. In Topeka yesterday he and Major Henry Inman headed the procession in a carriage.

"Colonel Cody expects to retire from the show business after the Paris exposition.

"The Wild West show is immense, and the crowds yesterday seemed to be well pleased. Perhaps the best thing that can be said of the show is that the contract with the public as published in the newspapers and on the bill boards, was carried out to the letter.

"One of the most interesting features of the show was the fancy shooting. In this Buffalo Bill, Johnny Baker and Miss Annie Oakley participated.

"Miss Oakley gave the first exhibition and some of her performances were quite remarkable. She succeeded in breaking two clay birds thrown simultaneously into the air by a trap and later accomplished the same feat picking up her gun after the trap had been sprung. She rested the stock of her gun on her head and shattered a glass ball tossed into the air and followed this by breaking six glass balls thrown into the air in rapid succession, taking from the table and using six different guns in the performance. She missed two targets. Then she walked around the table to change her luck. She missed no more targets.

"Johnny Baker's most marvelous feat, perhaps, was shooting a glass ball tossed into the air while standing on his head.

He also shattered two glass balls in rapid succession while bending over.

"Buffalo Bill broke glass balls thrown into the air while riding about the arena at a canter. Oftentimes two of the balls were in the air at a time, but his unerring aim always broke them before they reached the ground.

"The attempted robbery of the Deadwood coach by Indians and the successful repulse were interesting features of the program and suggested with striking vividness what the real occurrence would be. In the Custer battle the scene was also very realistic, perhaps the best feature being the cleverness with which the horses simulated death. So realistic was the entire scene that it was not hard to imagine the feelings of the men who came upon the remains of Custer's gallant band after the actual battle in 1876.

"The drill by veterans of the Fifth United States artillery was good, as were the exercises by veterans of the Sixth United States cavalry. These are real veterans, and every man has a record. John Mack, in charge of the artillery, was for fifteen years in various branches of the government service. He was buglar (sic) on the cruiser San Francisco when Captain Sampson—now Admiral Sampson—was in command. James G. Warren, in charge of the cavalry, was at the battle of Wounded Knee with the Sixth cavalry.

This Enquirer litho was used in 1898. Circus World Museum collection.

"The squads of Royal Irish Lancers, German Guards, Cossacks, Mexicans, Cubans and Arabs were genuine. A man named Saville, with the Lancers, formerly belonged to the body guard of Sir Herbert Kitchener, now in command of the English forces on the Nile.

"The Cubans were all men who had seen fighting, and every one had a wound. One was minus a leg, the result of a Spanish bullet. But the Cubans did not get a glad hand. The people have been reading about how the insurgents acted at Santiago, and the veterans with Colonel Cody's show created less enthusiasm than any of his rough riders.

"The feats of horsemanship of the rough riders proved to most of those who witnessed yesterday's performances their most novel feature. And it was not on a favored few that the admiration of the spectators was bestowed. Berobed Arab shared it with simply dressed cowboy. All the skill of the circus equestrian was shown in the feats of some of the riders. Perhaps the prettiest feature of the equestrian program was a horseback quadrille participated in by cowgirls and cowboys, led by Anna (sic) Oakley and Buffalo Bill.

"There were fifty Indians in the show, and their part of the program was well done. Their part was to ride, dance and yell. Few of the Indians were armed. They were a well built lot of fellows.

"There were twenty-four numbers on the program. Buffalo Bill made only one speech. That was at the opening of the show when he introduced his 'congress of rough riders.' He said about a dozen words. The show lasted two hours and a half, concluding with a 'concert'—a 'feature' which, by-the-way, was not advertised and which was very bum."

The *Journal* covered the wild west on Sunday; "The fair grounds was a street of all nations yesterday.

"Indians in bright blankets and paint bedaubed features were strutting about the grounds or sleeping in their tepees. Dirty looking cossacks (sic) from far away Russia, wearing heavy wool caps and long coats, were sitting here and there smoking long stemmed pipes. Greasy faced Mexicans in high hats and tight trousers were lazily strolling among the crowd of visitors and Arabs in flowing breeches and red caps might be seen in their tents or fondling their horses.

"Buffalo Bill's Wild West show, which has become a show of all



nations, was in town. The town, or at least a good portion of the town, turned out to see it. The few representatives needed to make up a perfect heterogeneous assembly was furnished by the varied population of Topeka.

"The show arrived in Topeka from Emporia at 4 o'clock Sunday morning. The train was in three sections, and it took about two hours to unload the three trains and transfer the horses and equipment to the fair grounds.

"An hour later tepees, side show tents, sleeping tent and mess tents dotted the tract. The big exhibition tent was not put up until this morning, as the opportunity was taken yesterday to make some necessary repairs on the canvas. The show struck six inches of snow at Trinidad, Colorado, ten days ago, and the big tent was badly damaged by the storm.

"The crowd at the fair grounds yesterday was the largest that has entered that enclosure since the Fall Festival last year. From early morning until dark in the evening hundreds of people, on foot, on bicycles and in all manner of conveyances, visited the grounds and gazed curiously at the different specimens of the human family.

"In an improvised pen near the grand stand the eight head of buffalo with the show were quartered. These animals, of which there were about 3,000,000 in this section of the country when Buffalo Bill first came to Kansas, formed a center of attraction for the crowd. They are eight of a herd of something less than 1,000 which altogether now exist in the United States.

"The animals are simply carried as sort of a trademark of the original 'Wild West' show. They are considerable bother, and the superintendent of the show says that they are exactly eight head too many.

"The big mess tent, in which the 650 people with the show are fed three times daily at an expense to Col. W. F. Cody of about 25 cents per individual per meal formed another point of attraction for the crowd. The sides of the tent were raised and the visitors had ample opportunities to



Cover of the 1898 Cody program. Pfening Archives.

get points on the national differences in eating.

"Sunday is the most expensive day of all the week. Practically all the expense goes on, while there are no receipts whatever as an off set."

The *Journal* on show day reported an event which occurred before the parade. "Three reservation Indians, very drunk but very happy, who came down from Mayetta to take in Buffalo Bill's show, were landed behind the bars at the police station this morning.

"Sitting Bull, as the policeman registered him, who is a sort of local policeman at home, started in to celebrate very early on his arrival in North Topeka and was creating decidedly too much attention and taking in too much sidewalk when noticed by Officer Smith. When placed behind the bars he gave a fierce whoop and executed a war dance that was far from thrilling owing to the weakness of his knees.

"Sitting Bull was hardly landed at the station before the wagon returned with two more of the tribe drunker, if possible, than Sitting Bull. They glared at each other in anything but a friendly manner.

"It seems that one had stolen the

other's beads and pawned them for a dollar to buy whisky and when discovered by the police they were arguing the matter in a pointed manner, using their fists and tongues as well as their condition permitted. A search of one's pockets revealed an empty pint bottle, a return ticket to Mayetta, a set of dice and a five dollar bill.

"The other's pocket gave up 'the bones' and fifty cents.

"One begged to be put in a cell separate from the other saying, 'Heap afraid he kill me,' adding as an afterthought, 'firewater bad for Injun.'

"They will be released after they have sobered up and in time to see their brethren dance at the night show."

All suspicious characters found on the streets Sunday and Monday were arrested upon orders of the town marshall to discourage pickpockets, burglars and other petty criminals.

According to the *Journal*, "Several thousand people thronged the sidewalks along Kansas Avenue this morning to see Buffalo Bill's Wild West parade.

"It was an unusual parade in at least one respect. It appeared on Kansas Avenue at the appointed time. The fact that the show Sundayed in Topeka is probably responsible for this, although Col. Cody prides himself on the way he enforces punctuality among his people in the matter of parade.

"There was but one feature lacking in the parade this morning which was in the parade two years ago; that was the French cavalry. The men who were formerly with the show on furlough were recalled by the French government, and it was impossible to secure others for this year.

"While the Frenchmen are lacking this year, two new features have been added to the show. These are a company of Cubans and a battery of United States artillery.

"A performance is being given at the fair grounds this afternoon and a second performance will be given tonight. Many country people came to Topeka this morning in wagons, and several hundred people were

brought in by the railroads from the small neighboring towns."

The *Journal* commented that, "The street car company facilities were inadequate to handle the immense crowd of people at the Wild West show Monday evening."

Leavenworth saw the Wild West on September 21.

The *Evening Standard* passed the word that Col. Cody is going to retire.

"The Wild West show will be taken to the Paris exposition, and after that 'Buffalo Bill' will retire as a showman. He will devote his time after that to irrigation and grazing."

After the show had come and gone the *Standard* had much to report.

"Yesterday when a large squad of the Twentieth's Santiago veterans entered the Wild West show the people on the benches received them with cheers and the band played the Star Spangled Banner."

"At 8 o'clock last night Mayor Edmond sounded the gavel for a council meeting but only six councilmen responded to roll call and that not being a quorum the meeting was adjourned until next Wednesday evening at 8 o'clock."

"After the Wild West show last night about fifteen soldiers from the post who had been guests of Col. Cody to the regular performance wished to stay to the 'concert,' but the concert manager declined to permit them to stay without pay. Judge Hawn, who overheard the conversation, paid for the men and the show went on."

"W. E. Bond, who was arrested yesterday on suspicion that he was working a gambling game under cover of a street faking business had a trial in the police court this morning and the case was held under advisement. Harry Abbott, Jas. Hall, and Thos. McCarty, who were arrested to keep them out of the show crowds, were fined \$10 each for vagrancy."

"A band of Buffalo Bill's Indians in full aboriginal costume came trooping down town on foot after the show yesterday afternoon and spent some time seeing the sights. While looking in at the show windows of the various stores they ran up against the Sutherland Sisters who are exhibit-

ing their long hair in the show window at Mehl & Schott's. One looked a moment to satisfy himself that the woman was alive and the hair was real, and then jumped back with a wild whoop. As the others clustered around and more ran across the street from the other side, he gesticulated wildly in Indian and finally said in broken English; 'Heap scalp lock, by damn.'"

"Call at Mehl & Schott's and see proof of the wonderful efficacy of the seven Southerland (sic) sisters Hair Tonic."

The Leavenworth *Standard* reported on September 23, that, "Col. William F. Cody, 'Buffalo Bill,' whose Wild West show gave an exhibition here Wednesday was taken seriously ill in Kansas City last night and was removed to a hospital for treatment. It was ascertained the sick man was suffering from a very bad case of typhoid fever."

"Mr. Cody had been sick for over a week but he considered it but a temporary ailment and confidently expected that it would wear itself out. At Kansas City yesterday afternoon he was so ill that he was barely able to go through the performance for which he was down on the program, but he insisted that the doctor would fix him up, as he did not wish to disappoint anyone who had come to see the show."

The final word on Cody's illness appeared in the Topeka *State Journal* on September 26: "Colonel William F. Cody, known the world over as 'Buffalo Bill' has recovered from his recent indisposition, which was thought to be serious, and last evening accompanied by his wife, who arrived from North Platte, Nebraska, in the morning, departed for Joplin, Missouri, where he will rejoin his show."

"His physician, Dr. Coffin, pro-



nounces the famous plainsman to be as sound as a nut, with nerves as steady as in the days when he was the nemesis of the Indians."

The Enquirer Lithograph Company printed this poster in 1898. Circus World Museum collection.

Buffalo Bill's Wild West and Congress of Rough Riders of the World in 1898 exhibited in the following Kansas towns: September 12, Hutchinson; September 13, Wichita; September 14, Winfield; September 15, Independence; September 16, Ottawa; September 17, Emporia; September 19, Topeka; September 20, Atchison; September 21, Leavenworth.

So Endeth the Circus Annals of Kansas.

Emphysema, pneumonia, macular degeneration, declining stamina, and other ailments peculiar to octogenarians have made a burden out of a great pleasure. Eighteen years of great pleasure.

I had neither the time nor money to pursue a nationwide search. Routes, trains, horses, elephants, performers, clowns, etc., are important, but to me the most important part of the circus was the audience and the awe and wonder the shows inspired. The audience is best found in newspaper accounts of circus days. Fortunately, the Kansas State Historical Society possesses the world's second largest collection of newspapers, composed of nearly every issue of nearly every newspaper ever printed in Kansas. I chose to mine what was available, and if I should search for another 18 years, I would not exhaust my source.

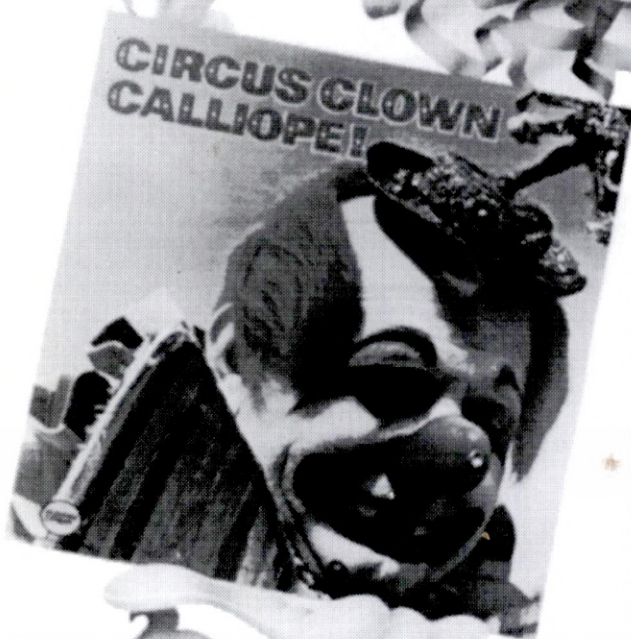
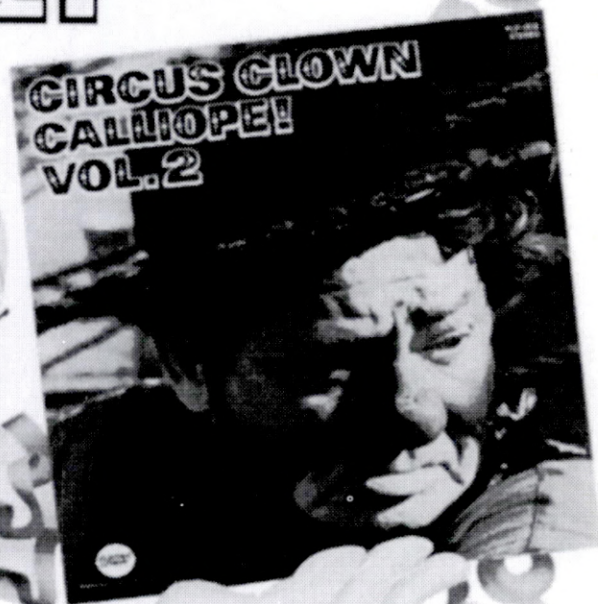
I have enjoyed my five minutes in the center ring, and if I have brought pleasure and information to my readers my reward has been ample.

I Love You, Honey—But the Season's Over. Orin Copple King.



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